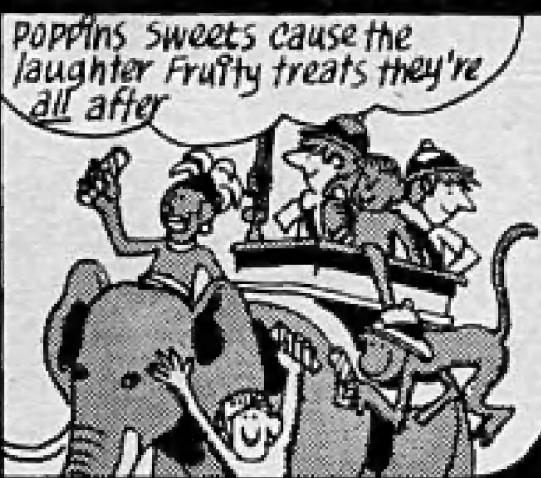
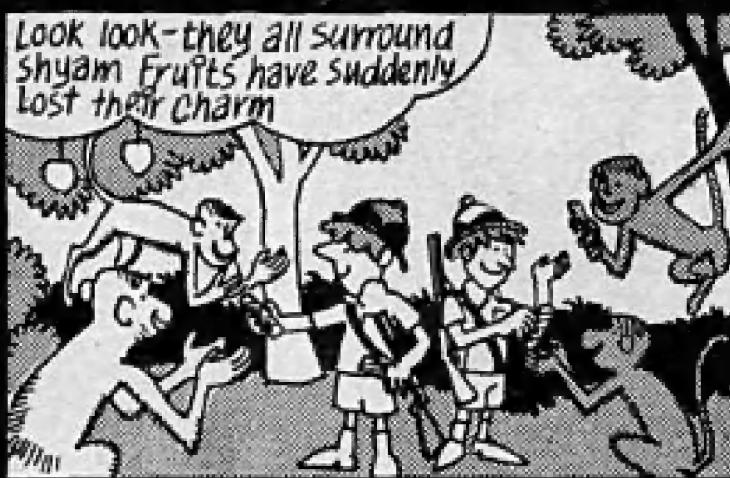
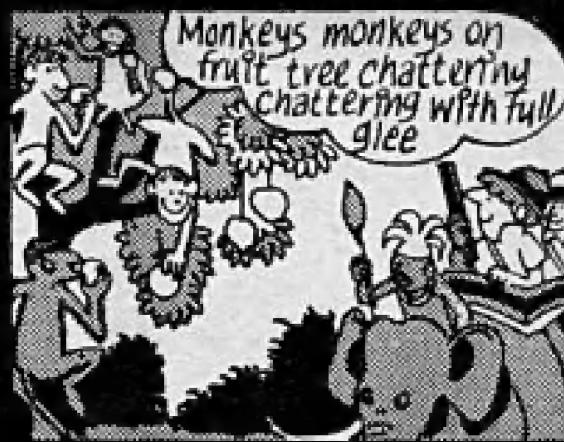
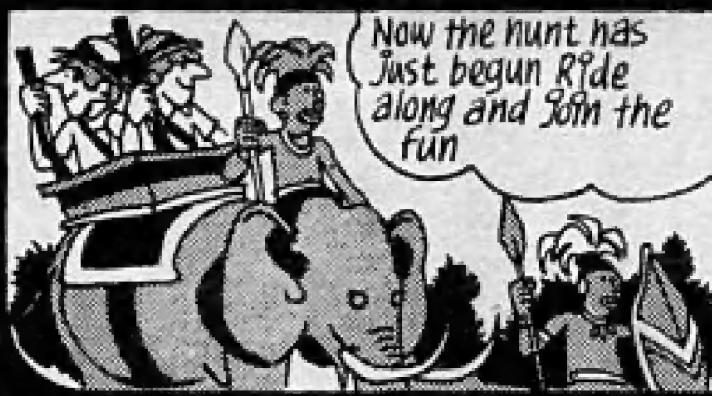




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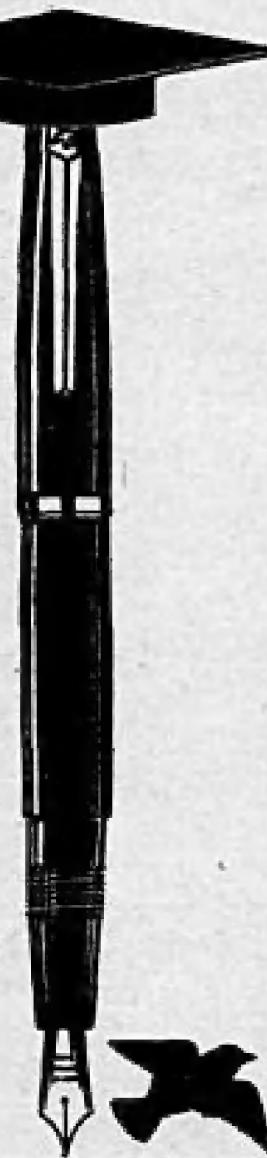
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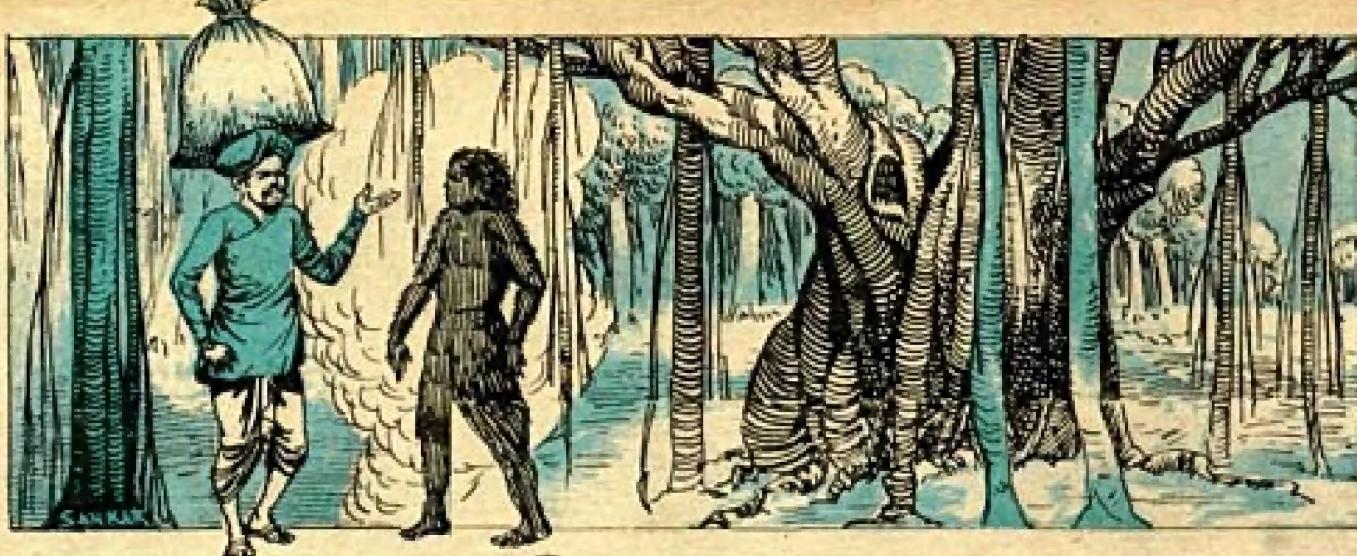
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## THE UNHOLY SACK

Once upon a time there lived a merchant who was always in need of money. His family was large and his income very small. Therefore he had to struggle hard to make both ends meet. He would go to the next town, buy some goods and sell them in the next place for a profit. But he had to pass the customs barrier and pay duty on all the articles he sold. This he did not like and in order to avoid the customs post, he would make a detour which led him through a dense forest said to be haunted by fierce ghosts.

One day as he was passing through the forest in his cart he was accosted by a fierce looking ghost.

"Ah! A man of flesh and blood, eh! I shall gobble you

up now," roared the ghost.

The frightened merchant gathered his wits together and boldly replied, "Oh! It's you, is it! I was afraid it was one of those customs chaps."

"Oh!" said the surprised ghost. "Who is this customs chap of whom you are more afraid than of me? Is he more powerful?"

The merchant replied, "Of course, he is. A thousand times more powerful than you. Never go near him. You will be rewarded with blows and kicks. But, of course, he doesn't gobble people all at the same time. A little at a time, he swallows, but it is very painful."

The ghost scratched its head and said, "Then I must meet this fellow right now."

The merchant replied, "But he lives in the town. Anyway, sit inside this bag. I'll tie the mouth securely. But remember, not a peep out of you. Whatever he does, keep absolutely quiet. After you've seen and felt him, I'll help you to escape."

The ghost agreed and got into the bag. The merchant tied the sack securely and lifted it on to his cart. Then he came to the city gates where he was stopped by the guards manning the customs post.

"Hay there! Stop, what have you got in that sack?"

The merchant replied obediently, "Sir, this sack contains nothing but dried tamarind."

"Let's see," said the customs man. The sack was lifted off the cart and laid on the ground. The guard poked it with his stick and prodded it on all sides. Each time he did so, the ghost

wincing with pain, but was too afraid to cry out.

Then the merchant was asked to pay a duty of one rupee and was allowed to go. He slowly drove out of the city and came to the forest, where he stopped the cart. The sack was opened and a much bruised ghost stepped out gingerly.

"You are right man! That guard is certainly very powerful. I am glad that you gave him a rupee and helped me to escape. In return, I'll do something for you. Dig under this tree and you'll uncover a lot of wealth. Take it and be happy. But don't ever go near a customs man."

Then the ghost leaped nimbly on a tree and was lost to sight. The merchant dug at the spot indicated and uncovered a pot of gold coins. Taking the treasure home, he lived happily ever afterwards.





## GOLDEN LOTUS

Once upon a time there lived a man called Ratan. He had a wife named Radhika who was very fond of gold. She badgered her husband constantly about procuring more gold until he felt so disgusted that he decided to commit suicide.

He threw a rope over a branch and attempted to hang himself. But the branch broke under his weight and he fell down with a big bang. Suddenly a fairy appeared out of the broken branch and spoke to Ratan.

"I know why you tried to hang yourself. Here are three magic pills. Eat one each day after you finish your dinner. You will get a lot of gold."

Ratan took the magic pills and came home. After his dinner he swallowed one and straightaway fell into a deep slumber. In his sleep he dreamt

that he had gone to a green valley in the midst of which was a clear pond. A water-sprite guarded the pool which contained a solitary golden lotus. The sprite commanded him to take the flower and go home.

At this point in his dream Ratan suddenly woke up and found a golden lotus lying near his outstretched hand.

When he related his dream and gave the golden lotus to his wife, the greedy woman said, "Fie on you. There must have been some more golden lotuses there. Go and fetch me more."

Poor Ratan swallowed another pill and fell asleep. Again in his dream he went to the pool and brought back another golden lotus.

His wife was not satisfied with just one more. She began to upbraid him for not bringing

back many more. Soon husband and wife fell to quarrelling bitterly and the noise of their bickering attracted a huge crowd. The matter went to the ears of the king of the land.

He summoned Ratan to his presence and accused him of disturbing the peace. Then Ratan related all that had happened to him; from the moment of his attempted suicide to the procurement of the golden lotus.

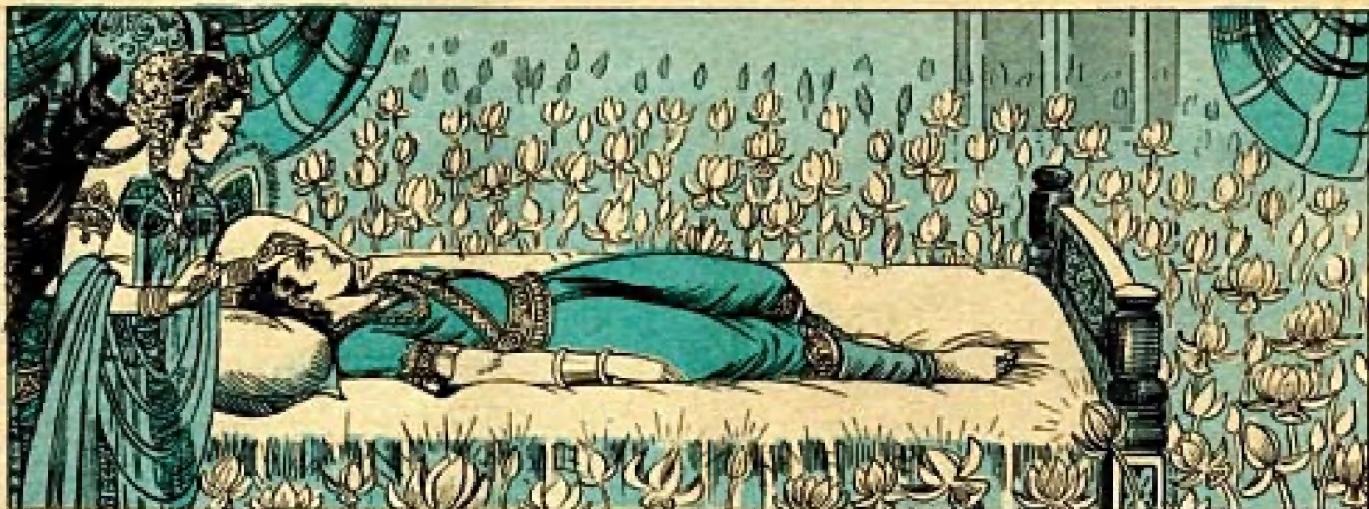
The king was sceptical of Ratan's account but decided to verify for himself the truth of the matter.

That night he swallowed the third pill and fell into a deep

sleep. As with Ratan, he too dreamt that he had gone to a green valley in the bosom of which nestled a clear pool of water. A comely nymph guarded the pool in which floated a lone golden lotus. The king was attracted to the maiden and tried to clasp her hand. But she exclaimed, "Oh! King, before you touch me, look at the pool once."

The king looked at the pool and was startled to see the waters slowly turning blood red. Suddenly a number of water-snakes surfaced and began to spread their venom all round. The nymph said, "Oh! King, those who ignore me and look





at the pool will see only the golden lotus. But those who stare at me will see this snake-headed demon who lives in these waters. Unless he dies I can never become yours."

The king asked how he could kill the demon.

The nymph replied, "Sprinkle the blood taken from your heart over these snakes, and the demon will be destroyed."

The king drew his sword, pierced his heart and fell down.

Early in the morning the king woke up and saw to his great

surprise and joy the nymph of his dream sitting on his bed. All round his bed were arranged a great many golden lotuses shining brightly.

The king rubbed his eyes and asked wonderingly, "Has my dream come true?"

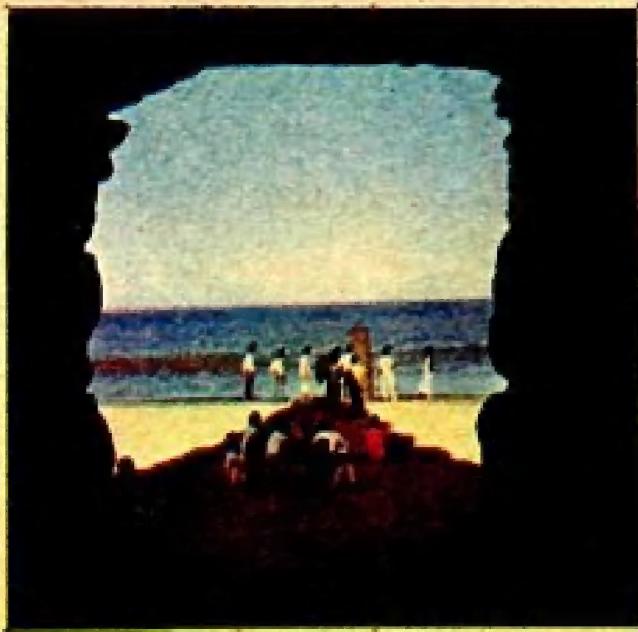
The damsel replied, "Yes, Sire."

And so the king married her and lived happily ever afterwards. But he did not forget to reward Ratan who became a trusted official of the court.

### WHAT'S YOUR SCORE?

#### ANSWERS

1. A FRUIT	9. K. S. RANJITSINHJI
2. MONT BLONC	10. 1932
3. MYOPIA	11. MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA
4. SIXTY-FOUR	12. TWO
5. BILLIARDS AND SNOOKER	13. 1911
6. NERO	14. BECAUSE OF ITS FIVE SIDED-SHAPE
7. OSTRICH	15. CHESS—ABOUT SIXTH CENTURY
8. BERNE	

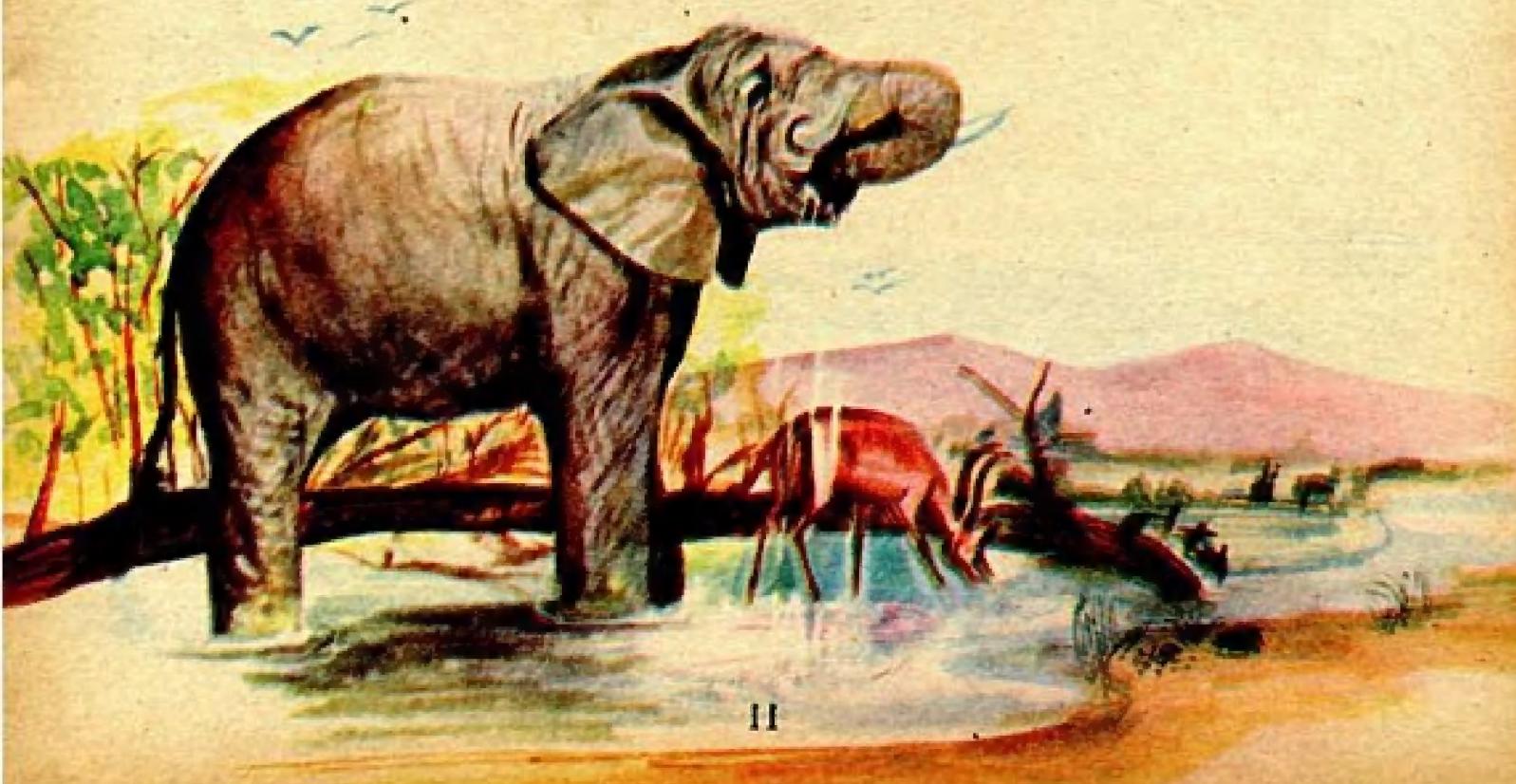


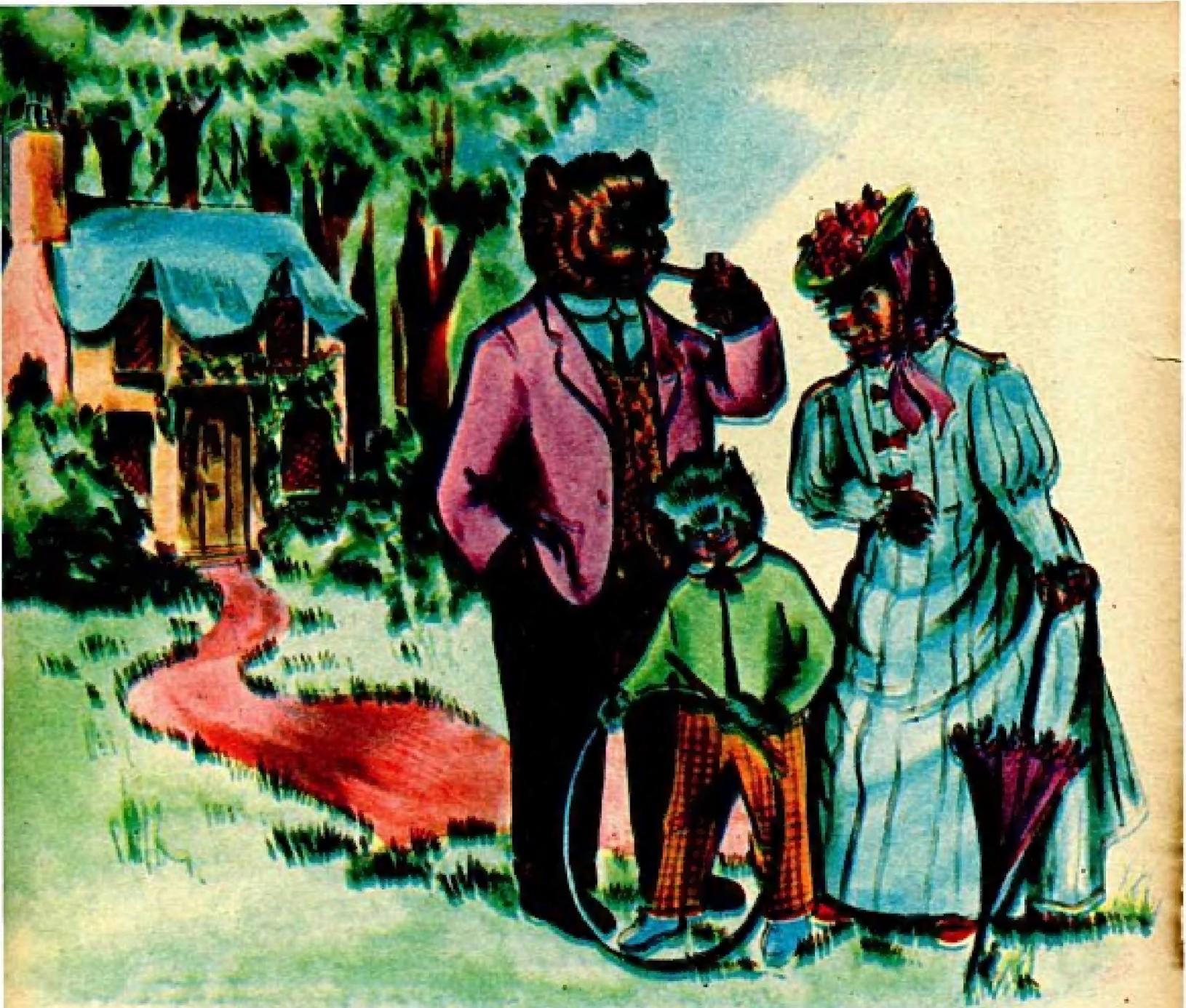
Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean—roll!  
Ten thousand fleets sweep over them in vain;  
Man marks the earth with ryn—  
His control stops with the shore.

—Lord Byron

### Do Elephants drink through their Trunks?

An elephant finds its trunk very useful for smelling, feeling and picking up things. But it cannot actually drink through it. The elephant's long tusks and trunk make this a very difficult task. Instead, it sucks up water into its trunk and holds it there: then it curls the trunk towards its mouth and squirts the water in. In hot weather, it squirts water over its back to cool itself and wash off the dust and irritating insects that cling to its skin.





Once upon a time, there were three bears. One was called Mother bear, one was called Father bear and the third was called Baby bear. Father bear was very big and strong and he had a big, deep voice. Mother bear was not quite so big as Father and she had a middle-sized voice, not too deep and not too high, but Baby bear,

who was the smallest of them all, had a very squeaky voice and he was not very strong because he was only two years old.

The three bears lived in a lovely cottage deep in the heart of a forest. They were a very happy family and they always had plenty to eat and plenty of clothes to wear. In the kitchen at the back of the cottage was

# GOLDILOCKS AND THE THREE BEARS

a table with three chairs round it. The first chair was Father bear's and it was very wide and big. The second chair was for Mother bear. It was not so large and had very soft cushions. The third chair was a small wooden rocking chair. This was for Baby bear.

Early one Sunday morning, the three bears decided to go for a walk in the forest, before they ate their breakfast. However, before they started out, Mother bear cooked three plates of porridge, one large plate of porridge, one medium-sized plate of porridge and one small plate for Baby bear. She put all three plates of very hot porridge on the table, so that when they came back, the porridge would be just right for eating.

Then the three bears put on their best coats and off they

went into the forest for their morning walk.

Soon after they had left, a little girl, whose name was Goldilocks, came along the path to the cottage. She was called Goldilocks because she had the most beautiful dancing, goldencurls. She, too, had been out for a walk in the forest. It was such a beautiful morning that the little girl had no idea how long she had been out





walking. All she knew was that she felt very hungry. "Perhaps if I knocked on the door of this little cottage the kind owners might give me something to eat," she thought.

She went up the path and peered in at one of the windows. It was the kitchen window and there, on the table, she saw the three plates of porridge that the bears had left behind. "Surely no one would mind," she thought, "if I helped myself to just a tiny bit of the porridge."

Goldilocks ran round to the back of the cottage and opened the kitchen door. She went in and sat down in the big, wide chair that belonged to Father bear, but it was much too hard and too wide. Next, she went

and sat on Mother bear's chair but she found this too soft and sank so far down in the cushions that she could not reach the table. The third chair she sat in was Baby bear's and this was just right. It was very comfortable.

Goldilocks picked up a spoon and tasted Father bear's porridge, but it was much too hot to eat, so she tried Mother bear's porridge, but this was too cold.

Dipping her spoon into Baby bear's porridge she found this just right. Soon she had eaten it all up.

When she had finished the porridge, Goldilocks felt very tired so she leaned back in Baby bear's chair and decided to have

a little nap. Suddenly, without any warning, there was a big crack and the back of the little rocking chair broke in two.

"Oh dear," thought Goldilocks. "Whatever will the owner say?" She was really far too tired to care, for she had walked a long way that morning. In fact, she felt so tired that she decided to go upstairs to find a bed to sleep on.

The first bed she came to belonged to Father bear. She lay down on it, but it was much too hard and wide. The next

was Mother bear's, but when Goldilocks tried to go to sleep on it she found that the mattress was much too soft. The third bed she lay down on was just right, not too soft and not too hard and just the right size and she soon fell asleep. Of course, this bed belonged to Baby bear.

Soon the three bears came back from their morning walk. As they walked in the kitchen door Father bear said in a big, deep voice. "Who's been sitting in my chair?"

"Who's been sitting in my



chair?" Mother bear said in a middle-size voice.

"And who's been sitting in my chair and broken it all up?" cried the tiny Baby bear in a tiny, squeaky voice.

Then Father bear looked at his plate of porridge and said in

an even deeper voice, "Who's been eating my porridge?"

Mother bear said in her middle-sized voice, "Who's been eating my porridge?"

Last of all Baby bear said in his squeaky little voice, "Who's been eating my porridge and eaten it all up?"

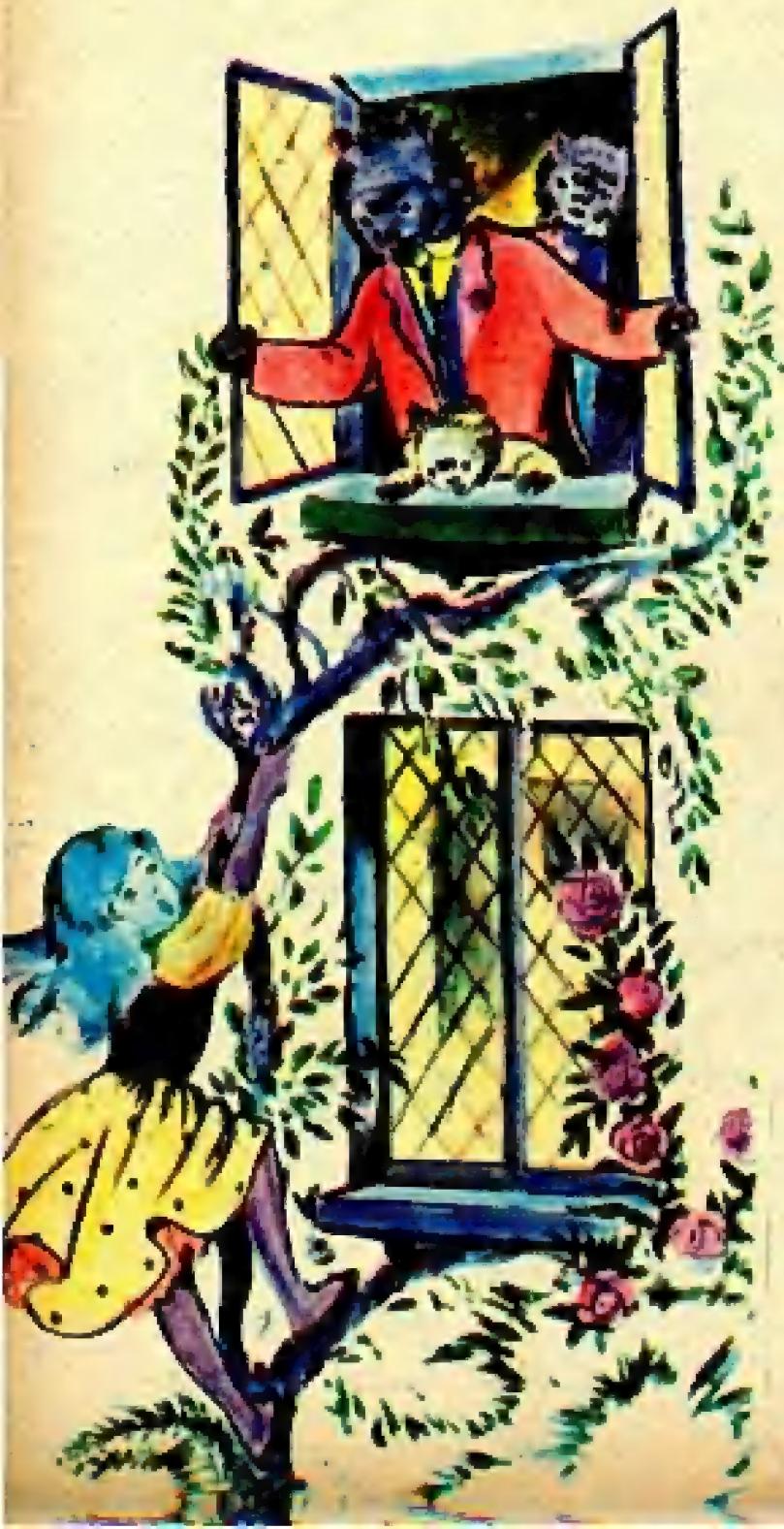
"Who is it?" they all cried together.

All three bears ran up the stairs as fast as they could. Father bear went into the bedroom and said, gruffly, "Who's been sleeping in my bed?"

Mother bear said, "Who's been sleeping in my bed?"

When they all came to Baby bear's bed, they all said together, "And who's been sleeping in Baby bear's bed? Oh, she is still here?"

Just then, Goldilocks woke up and when she saw the three brown bears looking at her, she jumped up and rushed to the window. Outside the window there grew a big creeping plant and Goldilocks jumped on to it, quickly slid down to the ground and ran away. The three bears, Father bear, Mother bear and Baby bear watched her run away into the forest, but they never saw Goldilocks again.





## WHO IS GREATER? GOD OR KING

Once, Akbar, the Great Moghul Emperor, called his Court together and posed a problem before them.

"Who is greater? God or I?" asked the Monarch.

The Courtiers chorused, "God, of course." But Birbal said, "You are Greater, Excellency."

Akbar was greatly amazed to hear this. So he asked, "And how is that?"

Birbal replied, "Your Majesty, you are capable of doing something which even the God cannot attempt."

Even more mystified by this cryptic answer, Akbar asked, "How can I, a puny mortal, be capable of doing something that even God cannot do?"

All the Courtiers looked with distaste at Birbal. They were sure he was flattering the Monarch to gain his own ends. In fact, they exclaimed, "Birbal is

trying to get some reward from the King by his flattery."

Birbal laughed and said, "Why talk of a reward? I have answered the King's question. Now, I'll explain it."

The Courtiers sharpened their ears to hear what the celebrated wit had to say in defence of his statement. Even the King was eager to listen to the explanation. He had been trying to unravel the mystery but nothing seemed to suggest itself to him.

Birbal began, "I said you were greater than God because you could do something that the latter could not do. Now, Your Majesty, you can send anyone into exile from this land?"

Akbar replied, "Yes, of course! If a man has committed a crime and deserves to be punished, I can send him into exile. But what has this got to



to do with God?"

"Patience, Sire," counselled Birbal. "You could exile a man from your land. Can God give a punishment like that?"

Akbar and the other Courtiers replied in one voice, "No! That cannot be."

Birbal smiled and continued. "Think for a moment. God's power and influence are spread all over the world. There is no place in the universe which does not come under his sway. Therefore, God cannot exile anyone from his realm. Wherever man goes he comes under the power

of God. Therefore, God cannot send anybody into exile. But you can. You can order a man into exile and make sure that your command is carried out. That is why I said you are greater than God."

The King was delighted with Birbal's answer and praised him for the keenness of his intellect. Then he heaped presents on him. The Court dispersed for the day and many Courtiers jealous of Birbal blamed themselves for not thinking of the simple answer before.



### Why is the sea salty?

The sea gets its salt from rivers, which carry with them salts and other chemicals from the soil through which they pass. Some seas, like the Antarctic and Arctic, are only a little salty, because few rivers reach them; but the Atlantic and Pacific are very salty, due to the number of rivers flowing into them through many lands.



## BELoved ABOVE ALL

One day Akbar, the great Moghul Emperor, for some unknown reason was highly displeased with one of his queens. So he banished her from the Court and ordered her to go to her mother's house.

The desperate queen was in tears and ran to Birbal to seek his advice in the matter. He consoled her and whispered, some instructions into her ear.

Next day, the queen went to the King to bid a tearful farewell.

Akbar was somewhat mollified by the spectacle of his weeping wife, but did not relax his stern mien.

"You can carry away from the Palace whatever your heart desires," he said.

The queen wiped her tears with the silken veil and replied, "Sire, I am indeed unfortunate that I shall not see you again. But it is my earnest request that at least you drink this sherbet which I have prepared myself."

Akbar agreed to drink the sherbet.

The queen had brought the sweet drink in a flagon. Unknown to the King she had mixed a sleeping powder with the drink. As soon as Akbar sipped the wine, he became unconscious and sprawled on the ground.

Then the queen and her maids lifted the King into a palanquin and were off. On reaching her mother's home, the queen had

the King carried in and made him comfortable in her boudoir.

A little later Akbar woke up and was puzzled to find himself in strange surroundings. He was surprised to see the vanished queen sitting by his side. Weakly he queried, "Where am I?"

The queen replied, "Sire, this is my mother's house."

The King scratched his head and again asked, "Well, what am I doing here?"

"I had you brought here," replied the queen calmly.

Thoroughly aroused by this reply, the King propped himself on his elbow and demanded angrily to know why she had brought him there.

Meekly, the queen replied, "Sire, have you forgotten? Remember, you said I could take away from the Palace whatever my heart desired."

Irritated, Akbar said, "Yes! I remember very well. But why am I here?"

"Because you are the thing my heart desires most. That's why I put you into the palanquin and brought you here. Tell me, Sire, have I done wrong?"

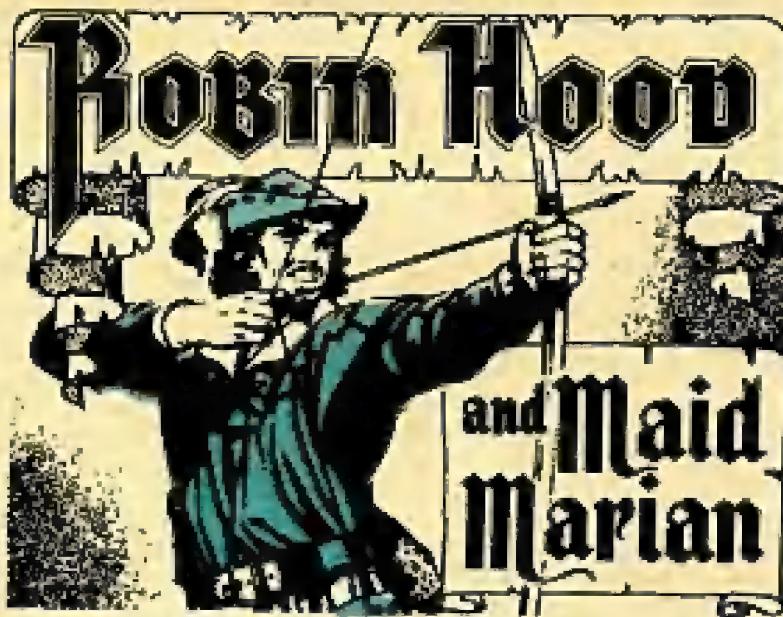
Akbar was rendered speechless by this saucy answer. He could not deny the justice of the statement. So he stayed in his father-in-law's home for a few days and then returned to the Court.

But all the while, he was wondering how his queen, who was normally not very bright could have turned the tables on him so effectively.

He taxed her with it, and at last she revealed how Birbal had come to her rescue.

The King was delighted at the wit and resourcefulness of his Minister and rewarded him handsomely.





Richard Lion Heart was so pleased with the way Robin had helped him that he gave a free pardon to all the outlaws of Sherwood Forest. He also promised to restore to them the property the Normans had stolen.

Before he had time to keep that promise, the king had to go away to the fighting in France. Robin Hood had to go to London and Allan a Dale and Little John went with him, while the other outlaws remained in Sherwood Forest.



There was work for the outlaws to do in Sherwood Forest, such as cutting wood, growing wheat for their food, but it was the hard working Much the Miller who did the work while Frait Tuck was content to do just nothing at all!

"Any sign of Robin, yet?" asked Much the Miller as Friar Tuck lolled in the fork of a tree. "Robin will not come home until the king returns from France," replied Friar Tuck, "so why not rest with me, brother, while you can?"



In London Robin spent a happy time with Maid Marian and her friend, Gwen. Allan a Dale sang beautiful songs for them. One day when they were in conference, they heard a lot of shouting out in the street.



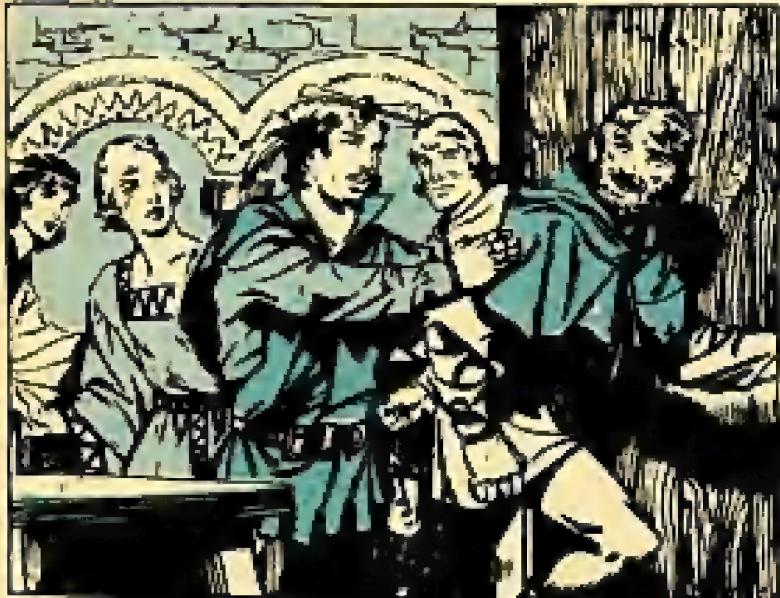


They ran to the window and stood there staring down into the street. People were thronging there, wondering what the trouble was, when suddenly a man came running along. "The king is dead!" he shouted. "King Richard is dead!"

It was terrible news. "I cannot believe it," said Robin Hood: "I must find out if it is really true. If it is, then we are in great danger, here in London." He began to rush towards the door, but he heard somebody coming.



It was Little John, who had been out in the streets and had heard the dreadful news. He came thundering up the stairs, two at a time, shouting loudly as he ran: "Have you heard, Robin? Where are you? It's really bad news."



Little John burst into the room, still shouting the bad news. "King Richard is killed. Prince John will declare himself as King. Oh! His soldiers are coming this way! What shall we do now?" "We must get back to Sherwood quickly," said Robin. Unheeding his advice, Marian and Gwen also followed him.

Maid Marian and Gwen quickly got their things together; then, by chance, Maid Marian looked out of the window. She turned and called to Robin, anxiously, "Robin, there are Norman soldiers in the street. Whatever can we do?"





Robin took one look. "There is no doubt about it," he said. "They are coming here, for us. We shall have to go the way Little John went down the back stairs and out to the yard. I hope the horses are ready and waiting!"

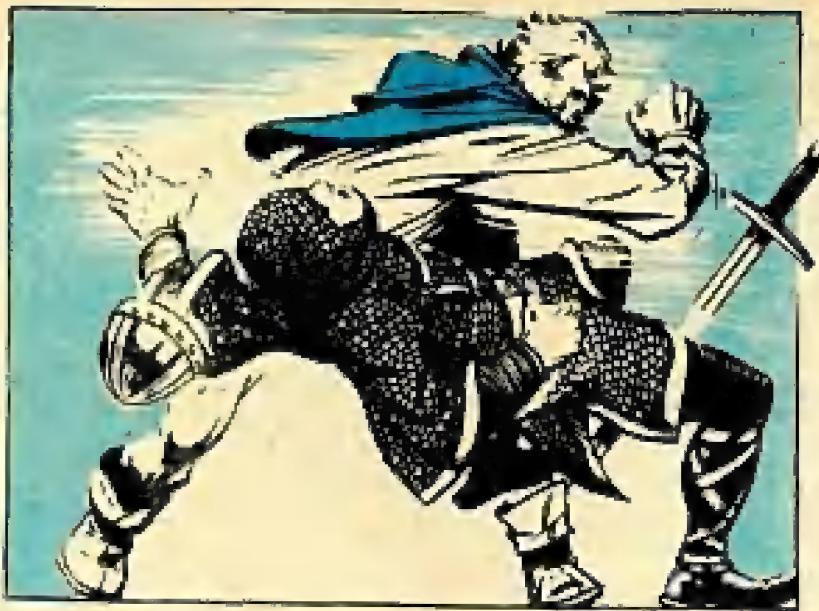


In the meantime, Little John had wasted no time. He sped to the yard of the inn and luckily found the inn-keeper there. "I need five strong horses," he said, "and I want them quickly. Here is the money!" Then he turned, sharply.



He had heard a heavy footfall behind him. He spun round, and saw a Norman soldier standing there, sword in hand. "You are my prisoner, fellow," declared the soldier. But Little John was not one to surrender as easily as that!

Little John was a giant of a man, but he could move with astonishing speed. He hurled himself bodily straight at the Norman soldier and hit him a mighty blow on the head so that the man reeled and fell, and lay there senseless.



Just at that moment, Robin Hood, who dashed into the yard of the inn saw in a flash what had happened. "Well done, Little John," he exclaimed. "The way is clear." Then they rode like the wind through the narrow streets of London and galloped faster and faster to Sherwood Forest.



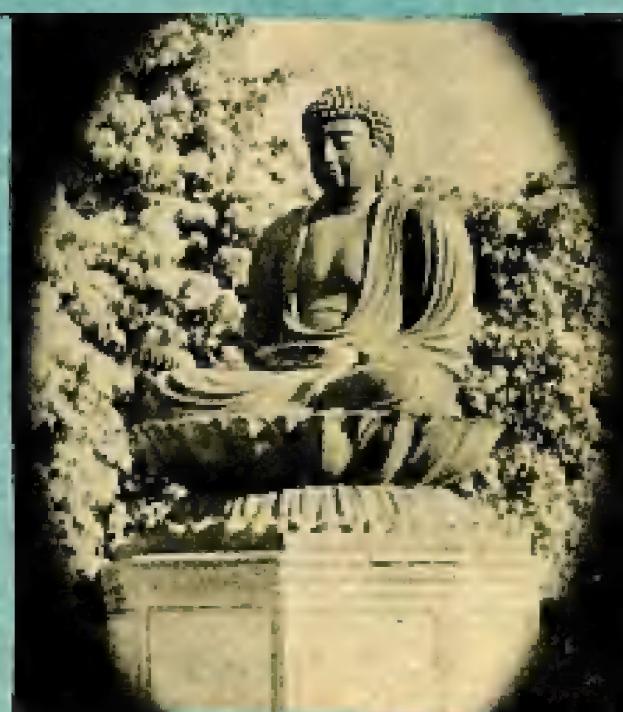
ANOTHER EXCITING EPISODE IN NEXT ISSUE

# PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST

Winning captions will be announced in the December issue



D. N. Shirke



A. L. Syed

- These two photographs are somewhat related. Can you think of suitable captions? Could be single words, or several words, but the two captions must be related to each other. -
- Rs. 20 will be awarded as prize for the best caption. Remember, your entry must reach us by 31st October.
- Write your entry on a post card, give your full name, address, age and post to :

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## Result of Photo Caption Contest in August Issue

The prize is awarded to  
Miss Heather Gaudoin  
17/1 Elliot Lane  
CALCUTTA 16.

Winning Entry — 'Wearisome Struggle' — 'Troublesome Tussle'

# SACRIFICE

Rafiu Bendre

The little village nestled peacefully in the valley, a mile away from the banks of the River Indus. Gaudapur was a small village, but a rich one, the land around it being extremely fertile.

No one looking at the peaceful, tranquil valley would suspect that it was the scene of fierce skirmishes between the villagers and the dacoits who terrorised the area. Jatilsen, the dacoit leader, coveted the grain stored in the granaries of Gaudapur; his greed however, had recently boiled into fierce enmity when Parshuramji, the Village Patil, had hanged Jatil's younger brother.

In the village itself, the streets were unusually silent. The only sounds came from the village pond, as by its side, two little boys played with wooden swords. Ghanshyam, son of the Patil, was a little older than his companion Mukhi, one and only child of the Patil's chief herdsman.

As they played, it was obvious that Mukhi was devoted to Ghanshyam; he often took a blow from the wooden sword

without retaliating, and spoke to his friend as if he were a brother.

"The streets are empty since the menfolk went to fight the dacoits," said Ghanshyam as he sat down by the side of the pond. "And all the women are hiding."

Parshuramji had led all the men out a little earlier against Jatil Sen's dacoits, who were reported to be stealing the wheat. With their elders having departed, the two boys, both of whom were motherless, played freely in the streets.

Suddenly, with a clatter of hooves, a little pony ridden by Gopu, Mukhi's father galloped up to the children. Panting, Gopu flung himself off the pony, and ran up to the two boys. Ghanshyam looked at him in surprise.

"What has happened, Gopu?"

"Oh, Young Master, we are defeated. The dacoits will soon enter the village. Your honourable father has sent me to take you away: Jatilsen

has sworn to kill you in revenge for his brother!"

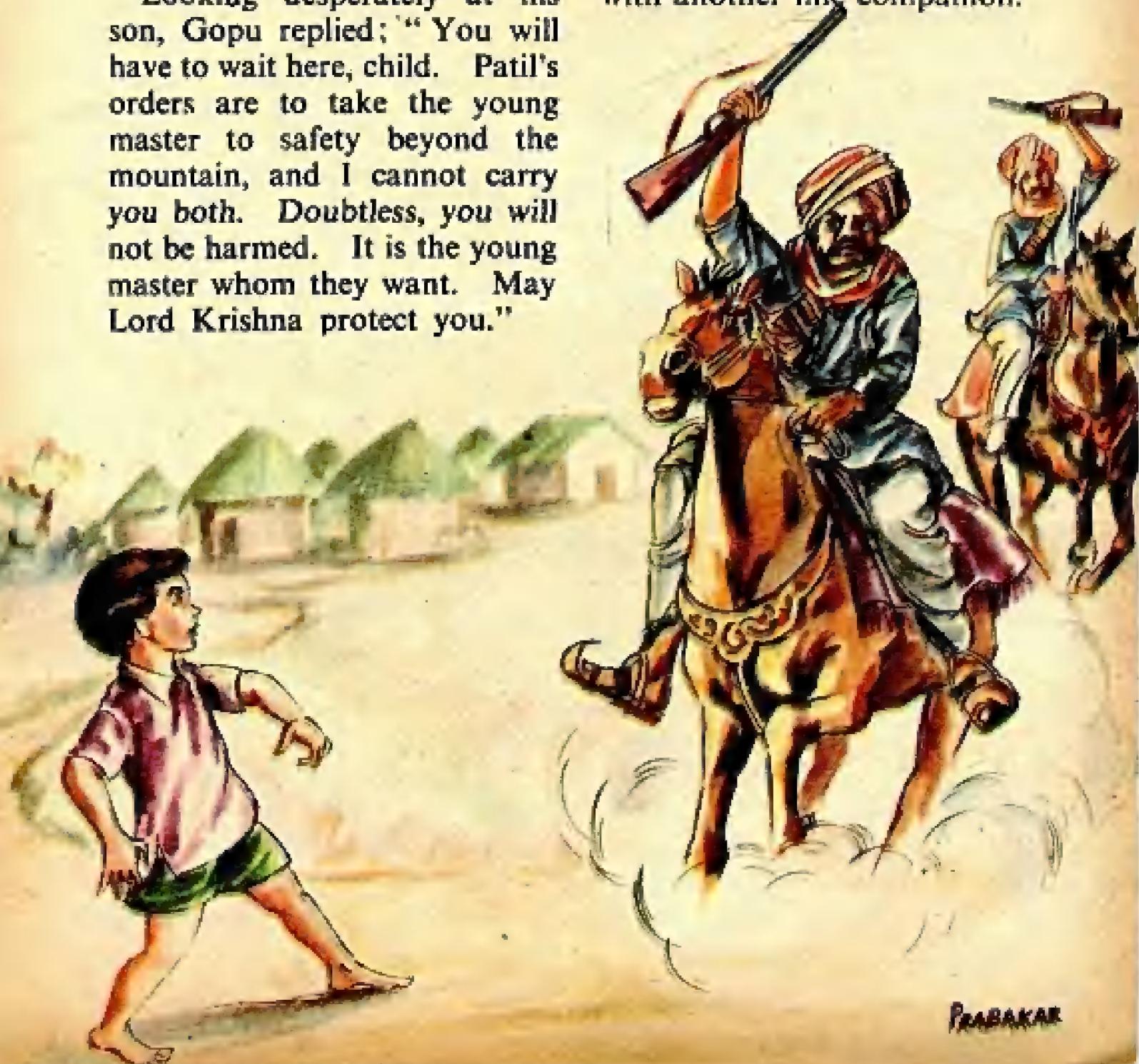
Even as he spoke, Gopu lifted up Ghanshyam placed him on the pony's back and vaulted up behind him.

"What about me, father? Are you going to leave me here?" Mukhi's plaintive question was almost a wail.

Looking desperately at his son, Gopu replied: "You will have to wait here, child. Patil's orders are to take the young master to safety beyond the mountain, and I cannot carry you both. Doubtless, you will not be harmed. It is the young master whom they want. May Lord Krishna protect you."

Gopu rode away as Ghanshyam shouted good-bye. Mukhi stood in the street, tears welling up in his eyes.

Then he heard the sound of hooves again and two horsemen galloped up. The boy almost fainted. The big beard, the fierce eyes, the red headband: it was Jatilsen himself with another fine companion.



"Who are you, little frog?" asked the dacoit chief.

"I am Mukhi," the boy managed to reply through chattering teeth.

"Then you are not the one I want. Ah, perhaps that rider in the distance will be the Patil's son. Come, Ganpat."

As the two spurred their horses, Mukhi cried in a trembling voice: "Wait."

"What is it, fool?"

"I told lies just now. I am Ghanshyam, the Patil's son!"

The two men flung themselves from their horses and advanced towards the terrified boy. Jatil-

sen drew his long, curved sword.

"A month ago, little frog, your father hung my younger brother. This is in revenge!"

The gleaming sword swung in a vicious arc. Then the dacoit picked up the body, threw it into the porch of a nearby hut. Striking a flint, he lit a piece of cloth and set fire to the hut. This done, the two rode back the way they had come.

A mile away, Ghanshyam looked back at the village and saw the smoke.

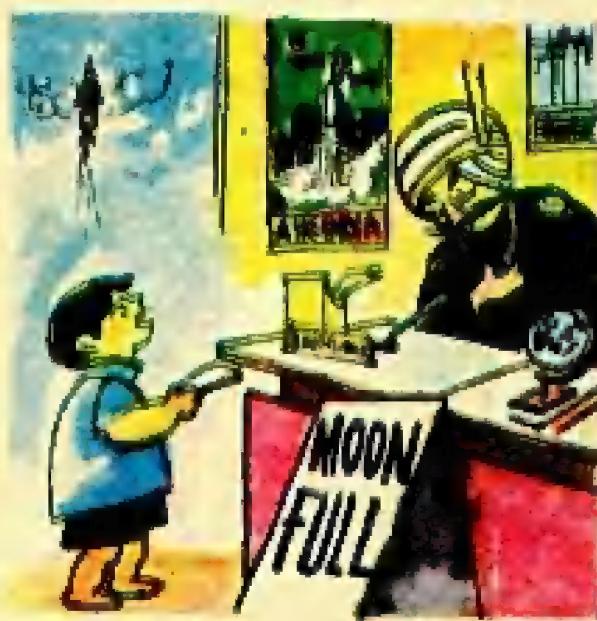
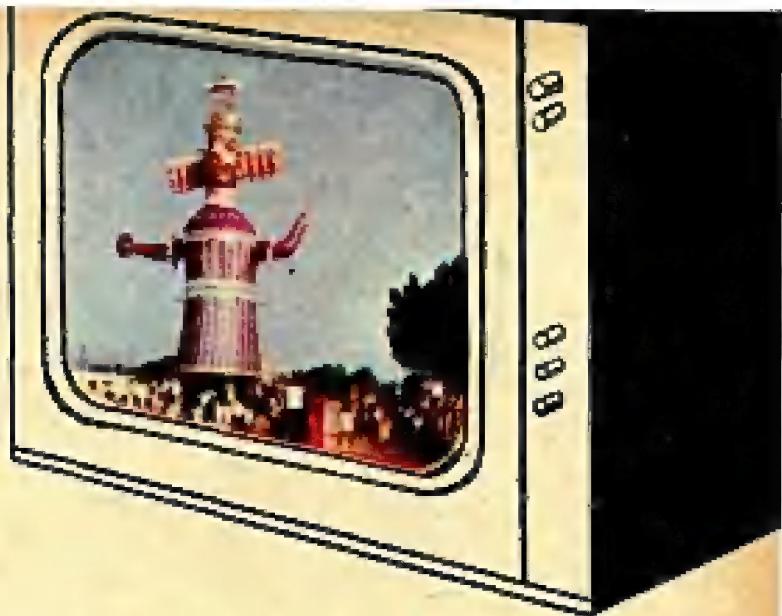
"I wonder what that plume of smoke is?" he said.



# TELEVISION

"Tele" in Greek means "far": and television means seeing a "vision" that is really far off. John L. Baird, an Englishman invented Television in the year 1926.

The first regular public service of television anywhere in the world was begun by the BBC on November 2, 1936. In India, the first Television station made a modest beginning at New Delhi on the 15th September, 1959. The Bombay Television is on the air since October 2, 1972.



It was the little boy's first visit to Air-India's office, and he was most impressed with the ticket office that took reservations for a rocket trip to the moon.

"I would like to go to the moon," he told the Air-India's little Maharaja.

"Sorry young fellow," the little Maharaja said with a twinkle "but all the trips to the moon have been cancelled for the next few days."

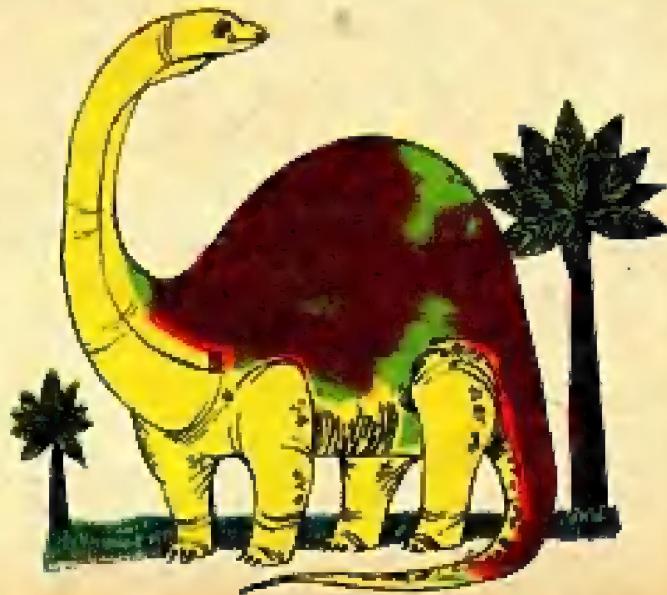
"Why is that?" the boy asked.

"Because right now," the Maharaja answered.

"the moon is full."

## WHY DID DINOSAURS DIE OUT?

The simple answer is, through lack of food. These huge creatures lived in swampy country where grew the bushes and foliage on which they fed. But the world gradually changed—the swamps dried up and the food of the dinosaurs became scarcer and scarcer until there was none and the animals died. Unlike some of the animals of today, dinosaurs were unable to adapt themselves to a different way of life and perished as did other animals who depended on the dinosaurs for their food.





# TEDDY IN THE TOY SHOP

*Mrs. Prameela Balasundaram*

A very big shop with broad glass show windows, carpets on the floor and lovely flower pots near the door is on a main street of a city. It is a toy shop, but not an ordinary one. This shop had toys made in India and also different parts of the world. There were rows and rows of exciting toys of all kinds, sizes and shapes. Things for little girls and things for little boys. Things to give to tiny tots. There were even things which sometimes mummies and daddies bought because they were so wonderful. In the large room behind the shop were hundreds of crates with more toys in them. They had on them exciting labels of far off countries. They were from Burma and Bangkok, England and Iceland, Africa and Austra-

lia, Thailand and Japan and oh! every country in the world.

One day, a small, knobly parcel arrived at this shop. The manager of the shop was surprised. He usually received large boxes and never so badly parcelled. It was from a small village in South India and not from any foreign land. Curious to know what it contained he decided to open it at once. He called an assistant and together they untied the parcel. When he saw what was inside, he nearly fell down. The assistant had a fit of giggles, for what was inside was the strangest looking, funniest little teddy bear. Well, you could call it a teddy bear—sort of a bear anyway, for it looked teddy-bearish, but you couldn't tell for sure. It was bright

yellow in colour. The tip of its nose and eyes were black. The inside of its paws and ears were bright red. The funniest things were the eyes. The left eye was much larger and rounder than the right one. But it was a chubby little bear and somehow rather cute.

"Who on earth has sent this funny creature," asked the attendant, wiping his eyes, for he had laughed until the tears had come to his eyes. "It's really strange," thought the manager, as he unfolded the letter which was laid in the parcel. Imagine sending this sorry looking thing to such a famous shop. Adjusting his glasses and frowning thoughtfully the manager read the letter. The assistant waited respectfully for his master's orders. He had no doubt that it would be thrown away on to the pile of broken toys. He thought he could take it home and make his little son laugh. To his surprise, he saw that his master was biting his finger nails. This was a sure sign that he was very upset. He finished reading the letter and turning to the assistant said seriously, "Do not laugh at this little teddy bear. It's a very special kind of a bear." So saying he picked up the

teddy bear and placed him all by himself on a top shelf.

All the day the little teddy sat with his arms stretched out staring in front of him. Surrounding her were rows and rows of mechanical toys. On his right was a large model railway. Busy little trains shrieked and whistled and scuttled happily round and round. The signals went up and down and the engine-driver stood very straight in his engine. There were aeroplanes too, of all types and sizes. The number of shining new cars that stood line upon line made Teddy quite dizzy. Then there were dolls, hundreds of them. Nearest to the Teddy were a group



of French ballet dancers. They wore stiff starched little frocks and stretched their arms out so gracefully. They had fluffy blond hair, like the finest silk and were the most beautiful dolls Teddy had ever seen. There were also a large number of teddy bears like himself. But he knew they all looked much better than himself.

When the shop was closed that evening everything was dark and silent. Teddy felt that he should have never come here. He imagined himself sitting on the shelf for ever and started crying. When suddenly he heard some queer noises, he stopped crying and looked around. To his astonishment he saw that the shop was closed. The toys had all gathered into little groups and were chattering and

laughing. There was the engine-driver talking to the clown. The French ballet dancers seemed to be getting ready for a party. He overheard their conversation and gathered that the party was given by the large Rose-Bud doll at the other end of the shop. Everyone was invited except, of course, our little Teddy. Being new he didn't know what to do and nobody took any notice of him. Soon all the cars and buses were full of dolls going to the party, for it was a very big shop and walking would have made them dusty as well. Teddy's part of the shop was soon empty.

Poor little Teddy was lonely. Big tears rolled down his yellow cheeks. He put his head down between his paws and wept his little heart out. He



thought of the little girl who had made him. Now it seemed to him that she was far, far away. He imagined to be with her, near her side, sitting on the table.

She was a cripple and sat all day near a window. How she wished she could go out and earn some money. Suddenly one day she had an idea. She started sewing and was at it for days and days. When at last she finished making the Teddy Bear she called her father, mother and her two little brothers to admire him. How they had all crowded around him. How happy they had been. "Our daughter may be a cripple, but she is a very clever little girl," said her father. This made the little girl break into joyful tears. Later that night when

the rest of the family were in bed, she was awake thinking about the bear. Teddy was on the chair near her bed. Slowly she had put out her hand and tucked him into bed with her. "Listen, Teddy," she said softly, "I have a plan. I am going to send you to a famous toy shop and ask if I can send any more like you. If they accept you, Teddy, then I can make a lot to follow you. Daddy and Mummy need not work so hard then and I can be of some use." Teddy agreed with every word she said, but he did not say so. He just lay there in her arms and was the happiest little bear. "It depends on you little bear," said the girl after some time. "You will be alone there and





RAJENDRA

there will be hundreds of other toys and you must never feel lonely or unhappy."

Teddy was determined to try his very best.

So, there he was feeling definitely lonely and certainly not brave. He cried a little, although he tried hard to contain. He could hear the happy party at the other end of the store. "I will not even look," he told himself and closed his eyes. Soon he was fast asleep being tiresome.

He woke up when it was daylight. The manager was already at his desk and the salesmen were busy arranging and dusting. All through the day people came either in groups or in pairs and always there were

children excitedly pointing to other toys but never to our poor little Teddy.

Night came and once again the toys were getting ready. This time it was the clown who was putting on a show. How they all laughed at his tricks and antics. Teddy watched this from his perch and thought the clown was the cleverest person he had ever seen. When the show was over, Teddy was surprised to see the clown coming towards him. "Hey, you up there," shouted the clown. "Aren't you ever going to come down from there. I missed you at my performance tonight."

Teddy could hardly believe his ears. He had actually been noticed and missed. He jumped

down from his shelf. "I wasn't invited," he said. "Wasn't invited?" asked the clown surprised.

"Nobody invites anybody here. Toys come and go. Some of us stay here a long time. Some of us go out again in a few days. But while we are here, we are all together like one large happy family," said the clown. "Wonderful," said Teddy. "I hadn't thought it would be quite like this. Besides," he said pausing and looking down at himself ruefully, "I am not very handsome, I know. I thought everyone would laugh at me." Then he told the clown his story and how he came to be in the shop. "Well," said the clown, "you are a very important bear and the little girl depends on you. As for your being not handsome, shall we say, you are as any other teddy, yet you are unique." So saying the clown took Teddy around the shop. Soon everyone was talking to him and he was part of the huge family of toys, as the clown had said.

So our Teddy was happy in his new home. He made many friends. His evenings were no longer lonely. He went to all

the parties and functions in the shop. But during the day, he sat stiff and erect on his shelf and no one even looked up at him. He saw many of his friends leave the shop. Then one day, it was the clown's turn. He was bought by a lady for her little son's birthday. There was a lump in Teddy's throat as he watched the lady going out of the shop. Did the clown wink at him just before he was put in the box, or was it Teddy's imagination?

Days went by. Still Teddy sat. Sometimes he was happy, sometimes sad and sometimes desperate. "What will become of me," he thought. "What is the little girl doing now?" But his new friends were kind to him and encouraged him. But it was very very difficult to be brave and wait patiently.

It was now October and Dasara was in air. Most of the toys which were in the shop when he came had gone away. There were hundreds of new ones and the shop was crowded more and more every day.

One day there was lots of excitement in the shop. There was a lot of cleaning and polishing and buntings and gay Dasara decorations were put

up. In the evening, there was an expectant hush in the shop.

At last a little girl entered the shop. She was dressed all in white and was very pretty. With her came her granny and an important looking man who was the bodyguard. She was the daughter of a very important man. They went all over the shop, looking and examining. But the little girl did not seem to be happy at all. Her granny showed her one, then another and another and another until almost all the toys had been seen. The shopkeeper wrung his hands in despair. Not a single toy in this whole shop could please the little girl. "She has every one of these toys in her play-room," explained her granny. "Can't you show her something different?" "But she has seen all that I have," wailed the manager. "There is nothing left to show her except, of course, the teddy bear," he thought to himself, "I dare not show that to her."

The little girl was very disappointed indeed. "I have to get only a doll or another toy which I already have," she sighed. Just then she saw perched right on top far away from

the other toys, a lonely looking, funny little teddy bear. She looked at it for a long time. Yes, it was a teddy bear and if you kept looking at it, it wasn't all that funny. It was cute and so different from all the teddy bears she had ever seen. "I will take that one," she said, pointing excitedly. "I have never seen one so cute and so funny at the same time."

So Teddy was brought down and dusted and examined and passed from hand to hand. The shopkeeper cleared his throat. Ahem! and told them Teddy's story. How he was the sample sent by a little cripple girl. When the little girl heard the story she hugged the little teddy bear. "You wonderful little bear," she said. "I will try my best to help the girl who made you." So saying, she marched out of the shop with Teddy tucked securely under her arm. She was very happy and so was her granny and the shop keeper too. But the happiest, of course, was our little Teddy.





# THE MAGIC CLOAK

A young soldier, who had been away for nearly two years, was returning home. He was passing through a thick forest when darkness fell and so he decided to sleep the night beneath a tree.

He collected some wood and made a bright fire to frighten away the wild animals. Then he rolled up in his blanket and soon fell into a deep sleep. He dreamed a pleasant dream, that he was falling in love with a beautiful princess and in the dream he was just about to ask her to marry him, when he was suddenly awakened by a loud noise. The soldier jumped

to his feet and looked around him and there, half hidden in the gloom of the forest, stood a dwarf.

The little dwarf had a long white beard and pointed ears and the soldier saw at once that he looked very cold and hungry. Taking pity on him, the soldier asked the dwarf to come closer and share some food and warm himself by the fire. The poor little dwarf happily accepted. When he had eaten enough and was quite warm again, he told the soldier that he wished to reward his kindness by giving him a magic cloak. Anyone who wore the cloak had only to make a wish and it would be granted. The dwarf said goodbye to the soldier and then vanished among the trees.

The soldier was eager to try out the cloak so he put it around his shoulders and wished. He wished that he had a huge castle with hundreds of

servants and dogs and horses. He wished that the cellars of the castle were full to the ceilings with gold and gleaming jewels. Suddenly, there was a clap of thunder and a flash of lightning and the young soldier found himself standing outside a huge castle.

All the wonderful things that he had wished for were there. Groups of servants stood in the grounds that surrounded the castle and they bowed as he passed by. Inside, there were fine pictures and long mirrors on every wall and as the soldier passed by one of these he saw his reflection. He was dressed in the finest clothes of gold and damask. The soldier looked so different he could hardly recognise himself.

From then on a gay life of hunting and dancing began for the young man. He mixed with all the lords and ladies in the land and the horse-riding, the

dancing and the banquets were never-ending.

One day, he was invited to attend a grand ball at the palace of the king and queen. It was a splendid ball and the young soldier danced with the king's daughter all the evening.

The king's daughter, however, was not a very nice girl. She had often wondered how this handsome young man, whom nobody had ever heard of before, came to be so rich and powerful. Throughout the evening, she made careful enquiries about him and eventually found out that he possessed a magic cloak. Then, while the soldier was dancing with another lady of the Court, the greedy princess slipped away from her father's castle and went to the house of the young man. There, she introduced herself to the servants, who, of course, at once let her into the castle. She succeeded in stealing



the cloak from the young man's room without being seen and then quickly rode back to her father's castle, before anyone realised she had left the ball.

The next morning, the soldier, who returned to his castle, discovered that his magic cloak had disappeared. He made every servant search the castle high and low for it, but it could not be found. As the young man sat thinking, he suddenly remembered that the princess had disappeared half way through the evening. He remembered all the questions she had asked him and he realised that it was she who had stolen the cloak.

He was wondering how he could get it back when, suddenly, the little dwarf he had met in the forest appeared again. The soldier told the dwarf about his problem and the little dwarf said he would help him. Reaching into his pocket he pulled out his handkerchief and unwrapped it. Inside there was a lovely, rosy apple. It was the reddest apple you have ever seen and it made you lick your lips just to look at it. The dwarf told the young man to give it to the princess and to watch what happened.

In the afternoon, the soldier

ordered his horse to be saddled and off he rode to the palace again. When he arrived, he asked to see the princess and was immediately shown to her room. The soldier gave the apple to the princess and said he had brought it as a gift, for it was the most wonderful apple he had ever seen.

Now, of course, as soon as she saw the red, rosy apple the greedy girl could not resist it. Taking it from the soldier's hand, she took a large bite from it, but, alas, almost at once, a very strange thing began to happen. As she looked in the mirror she saw something happening to her pretty, little nose. It began to grow and grow. Across the room it grew and out of the window, getting longer and longer. Down the castle walls and on to the ground it went, growing and growing. The poor princess did not know what to do and still her nose grew longer. Now it was outside the castle grounds and travelling at tremendous speed over the hills and valleys and into the next country. It was still growing long after it had disappeared over the horizon.

Imagine the fury and the unhappiness of the princess, who

realised that her nose must now be at least a hundred miles long.

She would not be able to move from the room in which she was now sitting. There could be no more hunting and dancing, and as for getting married to a handsome prince, that was right out of the question, now that she looked so ugly.

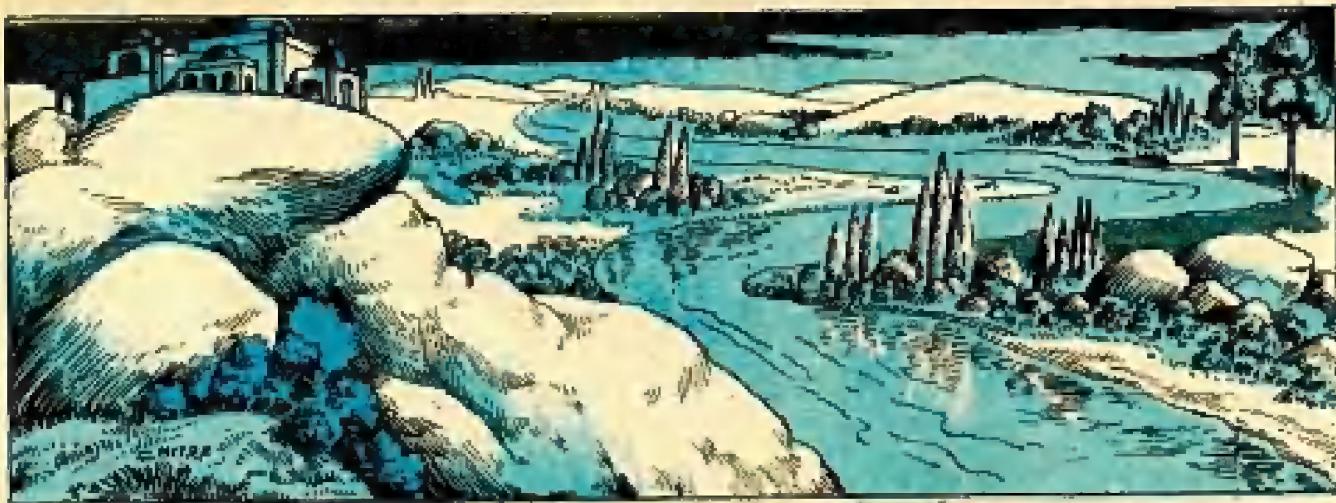
"What would happen," she thought, "if somebody, several miles away, accidentally trod on my nose?" Besides, in the Winter it would be terribly cold and her nose would turn a bright red. She realised that there was only one way out.

Tearfully, she begged the soldier to release her from the terrible spell and said she would do anything if only she could have her own nose back. The soldier was not so easily satisfied,

he knew how cunning and artful the princess was. He said that either the princess must give him back the magic cloak or her nose would keep on growing for ever.

Of course, the princess did not want to part with such a priceless treasure, but she had to give in. She ordered her maid to fetch the cloak from its hiding place and give it back to the young man. As soon as the maid had done so, the princess's nose began to shrink and within a few minutes it had returned to its normal size. From that day on the cunning and greedy princess never played any more tricks on her father's guests and the young man returned to his castle with his magic cloak, to continue his happy life of fun and gaiety.





## THE SNOW BED

Long, long ago in Kashmir, there lived a troll at the foot of the snowy hills. In those days, a lot of trolls lived there and preyed upon man and his kind. The poor folks could not fight against these monstrous creatures and had to submit to the whims and fancies of the trolls.

Now this troll who lived in a grand Palace was no different from the members of his tribe. He raided the nearby towns periodically and looted the folks of their wealth. Not content with that he married many of the pretty girls of the city forcibly. Oh! he was a veritable bluebeard and no one knew what happened to the girls after they were married to him.

That year he sallied forth from his lair intent on marrying for

the twenty-fifth time. As he was crossing the fields, his eyes fell on the comely daughter of a local farmer. He thought he would marry her. So he strode up to the trembling farmer and said, "Look here, you mortal, give your daughter in marriage to me."

The poor farmer did not know what to say to this brusque request.

Noticing his fear, the troll bellowed, "Tomorrow night I shall come to your cottage. Let the marriage take place then." Then he left.

The farmer ran home and told his family of the danger that awaited them. But Mallika, his daughter, was not in the least dismayed. She thought of a trick by which she could



frustrate the troll's designs. Then she whispered some instructions in the ears of her father who looked rather sceptical. But she said, "Father, don't worry. Do as I tell you. After that, you'll see how fast the troll runs from here."

Accordingly, the farmer arranged a big feast in honour of the troll. Huge barrels full of wine were brought into the house. Mountains of meat were prepared to feed the creature. Large drapes covered the walls of their dwelling.

The troll arrived, dressed in all his finery, and sat down to eat. Then he said "Ah! you have spent a lot of money in

my honour. Good. Even the meat tastes fine."

Mallika replied, "Pooh! This is nothing. We get a lot of rats here and they make excellent fare."

The troll exclaimed, "Is that so? Well, I must say you look well. All the women I've married so far can't cook this well."

Then he looked around and noticed the wall hangings. Mallika quickly said, "I wove those tapestries."

The troll now tilted one barrel of wine into his cavernous mouth and drank deeply. Then he smacked his lips and said, "Excellent wine. But who has brewed it?"

Mallika replied, "I did. I brewed it from all the rotten apples available here."

Rather surprised, the troll said, "Wow! You must be a strange girl. First, you prepare good rat meat. Then you weave well and last, you prepare fine wine from rotten apples. If I married you, my expenses would go down by half."

The farmer interrupted the conversation and said, "Well, if Mallika leaves my home, I'll really suffer a great loss. That's why I have decided not to give dowry to any one who desires to marry her. On the contrary, her suitor must make a hand-

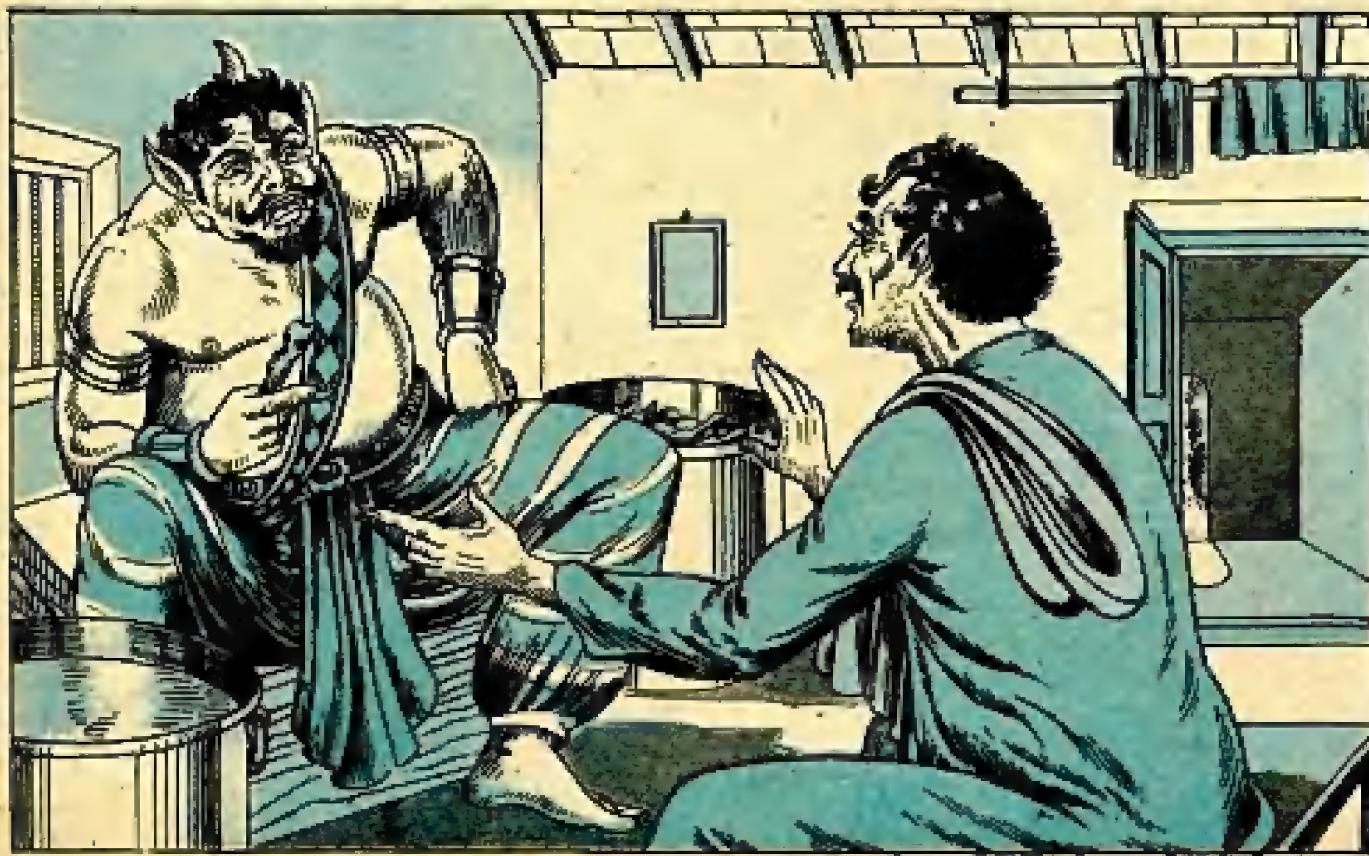
some settlement on me, before I permit the wedding."

The troll grew angry at these words and said "Hm! I'll take her away by force. What will you do then?"

The farmer laughed and replied, "Oh! you don't know my daughter. If you try force with her, it won't work. She won't co-operate with you. Only gentleness will have its way with her."

Exasperated, the troll said, "Very well. Take five thousand gold coins and give her to me in marriage."

"Give me ten thousand gold coins. I'll not part with her





for any thing less than that."

The troll thought for a moment and said, "So be it."

The farmer said, "Come with the money tomorrow and we'll talk about the wedding."

Next day, the troll arrived with the money and remarked to Mallika, "Well, Girl, are you satisfied? I've brought the amount your father desired."

She replied, "Good, but there are two conditions which have to be fulfilled before the wedding can take place. One is that you must build me a new house. Secondly, you must make me a bed made from the feathers of old goose. I love to sleep on soft beds."

The troll did not think these difficult tasks and went away. So he built a grand house for Mallika. It was now winter in Kashmir. But the second task proved more difficult, because folks in those parts referred to snow flakes as old goose's feathers and that was what Mallika meant when she said she wanted a soft bed made of old goose's feathers.

He exclaimed, "How can I make a bed out of snow flakes?"

Mallika brushed aside his protests and insisted that he make the bed or there would be no wedding.

So the troll set to work. But as many times as he gathered

the snow to stuff it into the coverlet it melted away and all that remained was the wet sheet. However, he tried hard and at last packed the sheets with snow and sewed them up securely. Then he went to Mallika, and said 'There, I have your bed ready. Now, what about the wedding?"

Mallika replied, "Good. But tonight you must sleep on it and tell me how soft it is. In the morning, we'll start the wedding preparations."

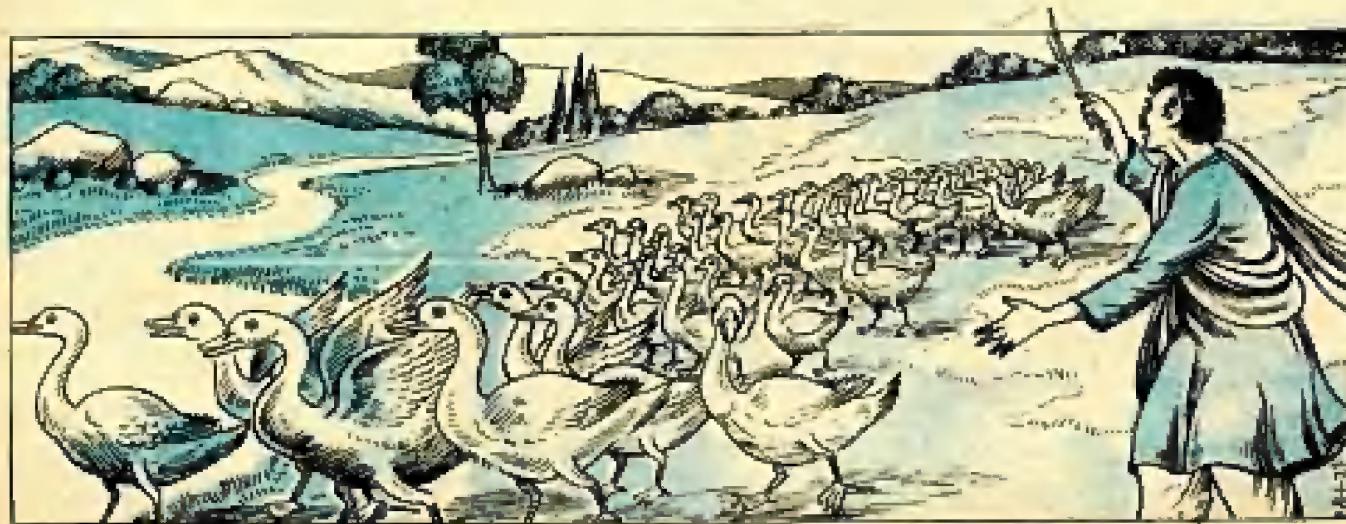
That night the troll slept on the uncomfortable bed. The sheets were all wet and the packed ice where it did not melt poked into the small of his back.

When dawn came he was sore all over and his body ached. He could hardly drag himself on the ground. In the midst of

the pain, he thought of his marriage to Mallika and how he would have to sleep on this bed every day of his life. So quietly he slipped out and headed for home.

When Mallika discovered his absence, she sent her father to the troll's palace to enquire about the wedding. But the troll sent word that he had given up all ideas of marriage to Mallika. Clearly, he had had enough. But the farmer would not take 'no' for an answer and pointed out that a breach of promise to marry was a serious matter. At last the troll parted with all his flocks of geesse to escape from the farmer.

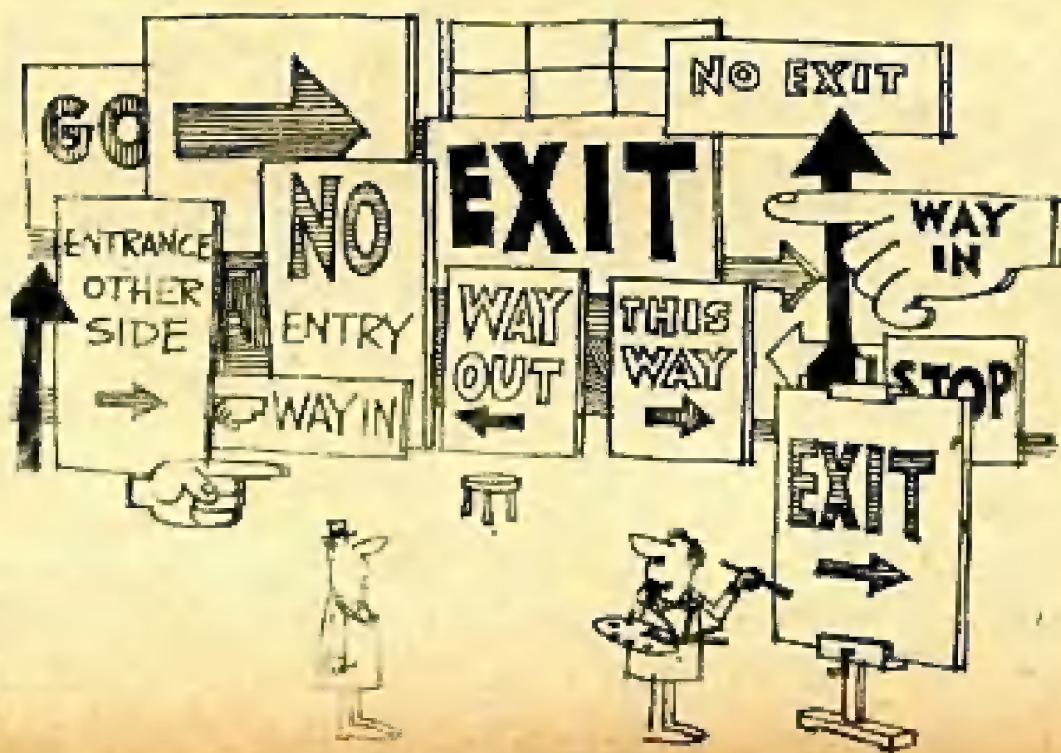
Thus Mallika came into a lot of wealth and married a handsome lad from her village. As for the troll, he never visited them again and he never married again.



# WHAT'S YOUR SCORE?

1. Is the tomato a fruit or vegetable?
2. Which mountain lies within France, Switzerland and Italy?
3. Short-sightedness is the more common name for——?
4. How many squares are there on a chess board?
5. In which game does a player score a 'break'?
6. Who is reputed to have fiddled while Rome burned?
7. Which is the largest bird in the world, yet doesn't fly?
8. What is the Capital of Switzerland?
9. Who was the first Indian cricketer to play for England in test matches?
10. The highest score in international hockey was in the Olympic Games, when India defeated U. S. A. 24—1. What year was this?
11. Which is the largest cricket ground in the world?
12. In the early days of cricket how many stumps were used for a wicket?
13. The first All-Indian Cricket team to visit England was in the year——?
14. Why the American Defence Department Building is called 'Pentagon'?
15. Which is the oldest indoor game to be played in India?

Now Turn to Page 10 and Check your score!





## THE ROYAL SPY

Once the King of Valpore had a bitter quarrel with the King of Talpore. Each ruler fearing an invasion from the other fortified his frontiers and was in battle readiness to ward off any sudden attack.

One day a spy sent by the King of Valpore went round searching for spies coming from Talpore. As he neared the frontiers of his land the strap of his sandal broke. He looked about and saw a cobbler under a tree. He took it to the cobbler to have it mended. Just then another man came over to the cobbler and said, "Well old man, so you mend shoes here? Do you know aught about the tearing of the card?"

The old man replied, "Yes, indeed! A while back three walked by on their forelegs. The sun's heat melted the cards from their hands. He who died

three years ago burnt them to ashes."

Then the passerby said, "Then the measurement seems alright!"

The old man replied, "Ah! Yes. I am expecting the young ones of the sea. Then only will the stomach of the Earth be full."

The spy waited patiently all this while but as the passerby prepared to leave, pounced on him. The old man protested and said, "Sir, why do you beat that man so? He asked me some silly questions and I humoured him by giving some cranky answers. How else can you deal with a mad man?"

The spy snorted and said, "Mad man, my foot! Whom are you trying to fool? I shan't leave either of you."

Then he dragged them before the King and said, "Your



Majesty! These men are the spies of the King of Talpore."

The King looked at his Minister blankly who hastened to get the full information from the official who had made the arrest.

Then he turned to the King and said, "True, Sire, these men are indeed spies of the King of Talpore. They were talking about how all the wells on the route of our army's march have been poisoned."

Surprised, the King said, "Is that so? But these two talked a lot of gibberish."

The Minister said, "Sire, let me explain. This old man pretended to be a cobbler. The question, whether the card was torn, meant whether anyone had died. The three who walked on their forelegs actually meant a pregnant woman carrying another child on her hip. The sun's gift is water, and the three died on drinking that. An old tree

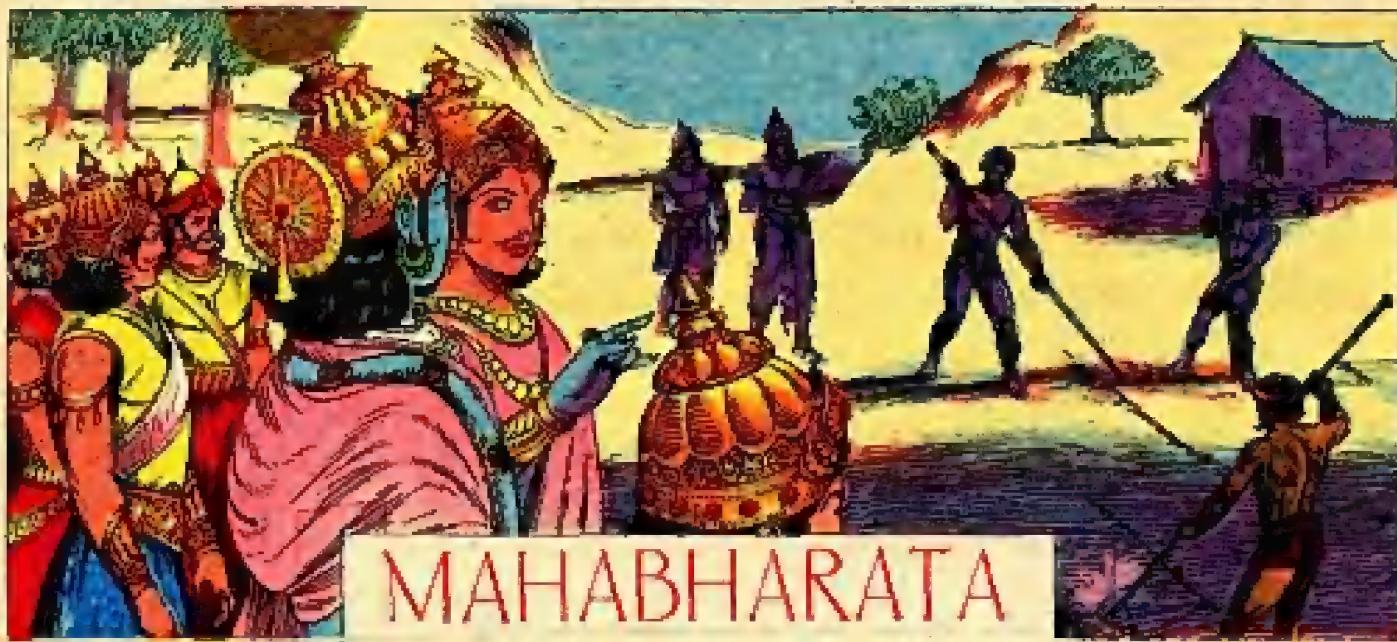
which had fallen three years ago was used to cremate them. The measure referred to the correct quantity of poison mixed with the waters. The young ones of the sea referred to the water wells and tanks. They expect our troops to die if they drink of their water. Then they would all have to be buried. Only then can the stomach of the earth be filled. This is the meaning of their gibberish. All this I learnt from our royal spy, who is the most intelligent man in our kingdom."

The King heaved a sigh of relief to hear this. Then he ordered the execution of the two spies and rewarded the royal spy handsomely.

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A wise man will make more opportunities than he finds.

*Francis Bacon*



*The story so far ...*

*When Dhritarashtra expressed that he had no desire to see anything else, the cosmic vision of Lord Krishna vanished after lasting an instant. Then the Lord drove to Kunti's palace to bid farewell to her. She said that Pandavas must regain their territories through force. Kunti and Lord Krishna tried to woo Karna to the side of Pandavas but Karna said that he would not desert Duryodhana even if he had the entire world in his grasp. However, he promised Kunti that he would spare all the Pandavas except Arjuna, whom he had sworn to kill. A sea of Pandava army raced towards Kurukshethra for the final battle.*

The Pandava armies pitched their war tents at Kurukshetra. The various kings could be iden-

tified by the pennants that flew from their tent poles.

Lord Krishna and Arjuna were very familiar with the battle ground. Dhrishtadyumna, Sathyaki and Yuyudhana had chosen their part of the ground well where they quartered the troops.

The Pandavas had camped on the banks of the Iravathi river, and round their tents, a circular moat had been dug up.

Physicians and artisans were busy with their chores, and Yudhishtira went around the campsite to make sure that everything was ready for the coming battle.

Meanwhile in Hastinapura, Duryodhana called his cronies, Karna and Sakuni and said, "Krishna is deliberately foisting a war on us. He is on the

side of the Pandavas. We must be on our guard, and build up our fighting strength. We must send our troops to the Kurukshetra field. We must have excellent logistic arrangements. We must guard against enemy forays attempting to cut off our supply lines. Go and prepare for all these. We must move to the forward positions without further delay."

The Kaurava armies with standards flying and bugles blowing reached Kurukshetra and quartered themselves.

Yudhishthira saw the vast hordes arrayed against him, and for a moment doubt assailed him. He went to Lord Krishna and said, "Lord, is it just to kill ones own kith and kin?"

Lord Krishna replied sharply, "Yudhishthira, don't forget that you have lost your kingdom and my peace efforts have failed totally. Under the circumstances war is the only way to regain your lost territories. Therefore, this is a just war."

Satisfied at last, Yudhishthira alerted his armies and a great expectation rippled through the ranks, as they awaited the signal to launch their attack.

Then Yudhishthira turned to Bhima and Arjuna and said,

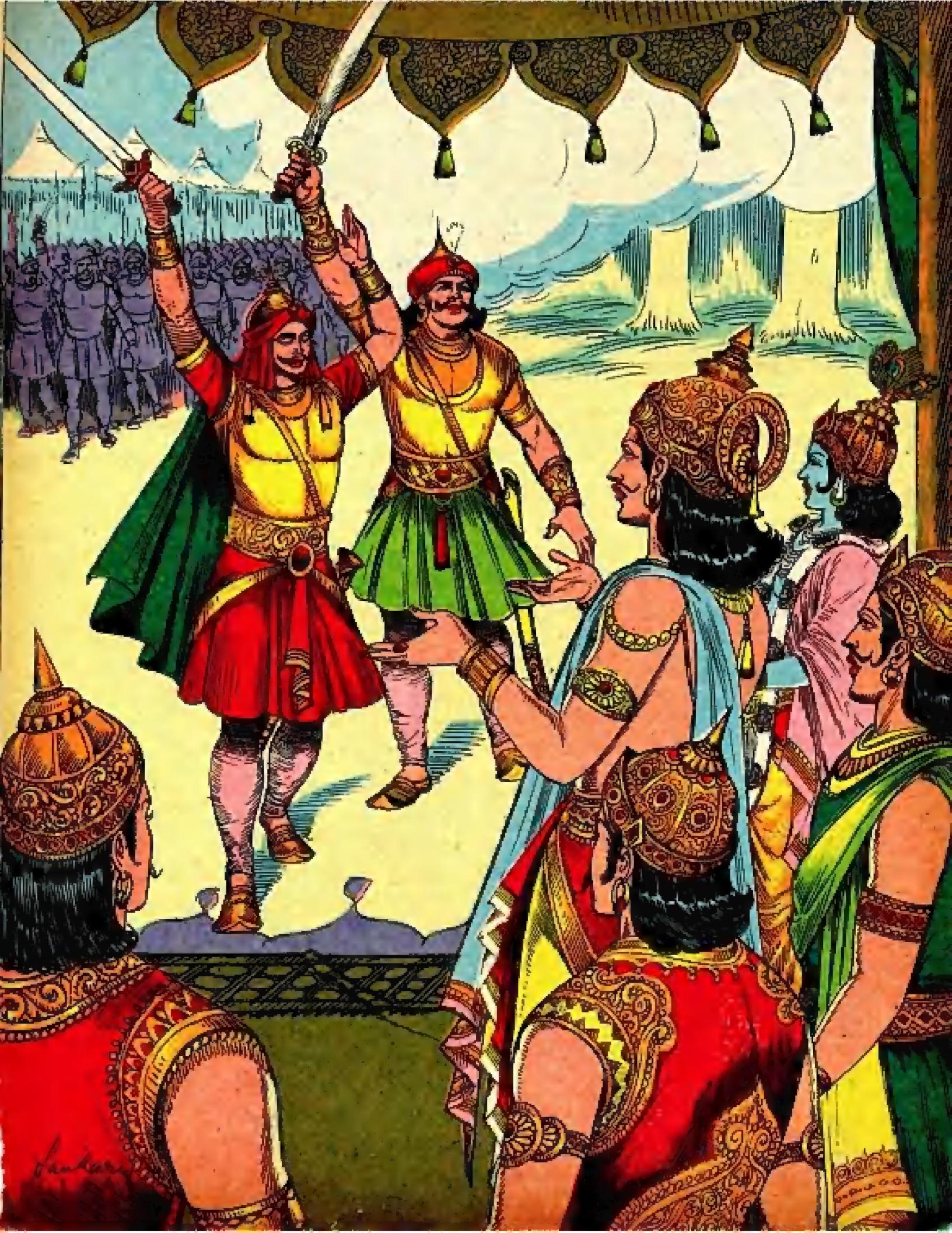
"We agreed to be exiled for thirteen years because we did not want to be the cause of the destruction of our great race. We endured severe adversity in the forest in the hope that one day we will be able to regain what is ours through peaceful means. But now all that is going to be changed. At the blast of the bugle, our friends and relations will engage each other in mortal combat and perish. Do we need such a victory?"

But the brothers replied, "Brother, Lord Krishna and Vidura, and our own mother have blessed our enterprise. Therefore, this war must take place."

Duryodhana marshalled his eleven Akshauhinis (one Akshauhini consisted of two hundred thousand horsemen, foot soldiers, elephants, and chariots). Kripa, Drona, Salya, Saindhava, Sudakshana, Krithavarma, Aswathama, Karna, Boorisrawa, Sakuni and Bhalika, were appointed generals for each Akshauhini.

Then Duryodhana went to Lord Bhisma and with folded hands beseeched him to assume over all command of the army.

"You must assume the





supreme command of the Kaurava armies. There is none more capable than you are. Under your generalship, our armies are bound to score resounding victories over the Pandavas. You are the only elder in our camp whose authority none dare challenge. I know that you are greatly interested in our welfare, and therefore, I request you to lead the Kaurava armies in the battle."

Lord Bhishma agreed to Dur-yodhana's request but imposed two conditions. One, he would not kill any of the Pandavas, and two, he could never fight side by side with Karna, the low-born. As the venerable warrior had never liked Karna

for his boastful ways, he declared stoutly that he would not fight alongside the latter.

When Karna heard about this, he flushed in anger and declared hotly that he would not step on the battlefield as long as the old gentleman was on his feet.

Though dismayed by this division in his ranks, Duryodhana went ahead with his plan and Lord Bhishma was ceremoniously appointed supreme commander of the Kaurava forces.

When Lord Balarama heard that the battle was about to be joined, he went to the Pandava camp with a retinue of Yadhava guards. Lord Krishna and Yudhishtira welcomed him hospitably and waited to hear what he had to say.

Lord Balarama said, "A great battle is going to be fought. Countless number of persons will perish in this conflict. But I wish you all success and may victory crown your efforts. I shall similarly bless the Kauravas. I view, both, Kauravas and Pandavas impartially. I have often told Krishna my views. But he has a great fondness for Arjuna. I know that as long as my

brother, Arjuna and Bhima remain allies no one can win over them. But a great sorrow overwhelms me to think that the entire Kaurava race will be wiped out in this holocaust. Therefore, I shall go on a pilgrimage while you fight out your dirty war."

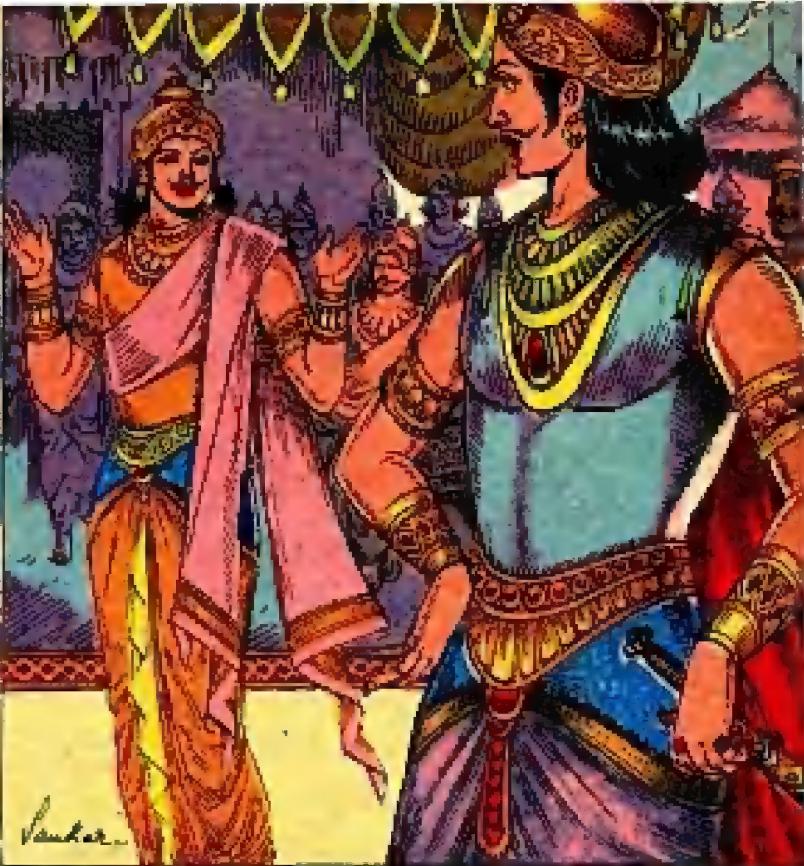
And so Lord Balarama departed with a heavy heart to the holy places.

Then Rukmi, brother of Rukmini arrived with his legions and went straight to Arjuna.

"Oh! Arjuna," he boasted. "Tell me if you need my help. I'll fall on the enemies and scatter them like chaff. I am the greatest warrior in the world. I shall rout all the Kripas and Dronas of the world."

At this vain boasting, Arjuna smiled indulgently and said, "Oh Great Warrior! I am not afraid of anything. I was able to rescue Duryodhana from the Gandharvas single-handed. Alone, I burnt the Gandhava forest. I recovered the Virata King's livestock from the clutches of the Kauravas. However, if you so wish, do sit with us and watch the progress of the war."

Angered by these sarcastic



words, Rukmi left the Pandava camp in a huff and went to the Kauravas. There again he boasted of his prowess as a valiant fighter, but Duryodhana turned him away politely.

Rebuffed by both sides, Rukmi left for his own kingdom without entering the Kurukshetra battlefield.

Thus in all the world, only Lord Balarama and Rukmi remained neutral in the great conflict.

Then Duryodhana sent Uluka, son of Sakuni, as his messenger to the Pandava camp. Uluka met Yudhishthira and conveyed Duryodhana's message.

"Yudhishthira, you are a sly

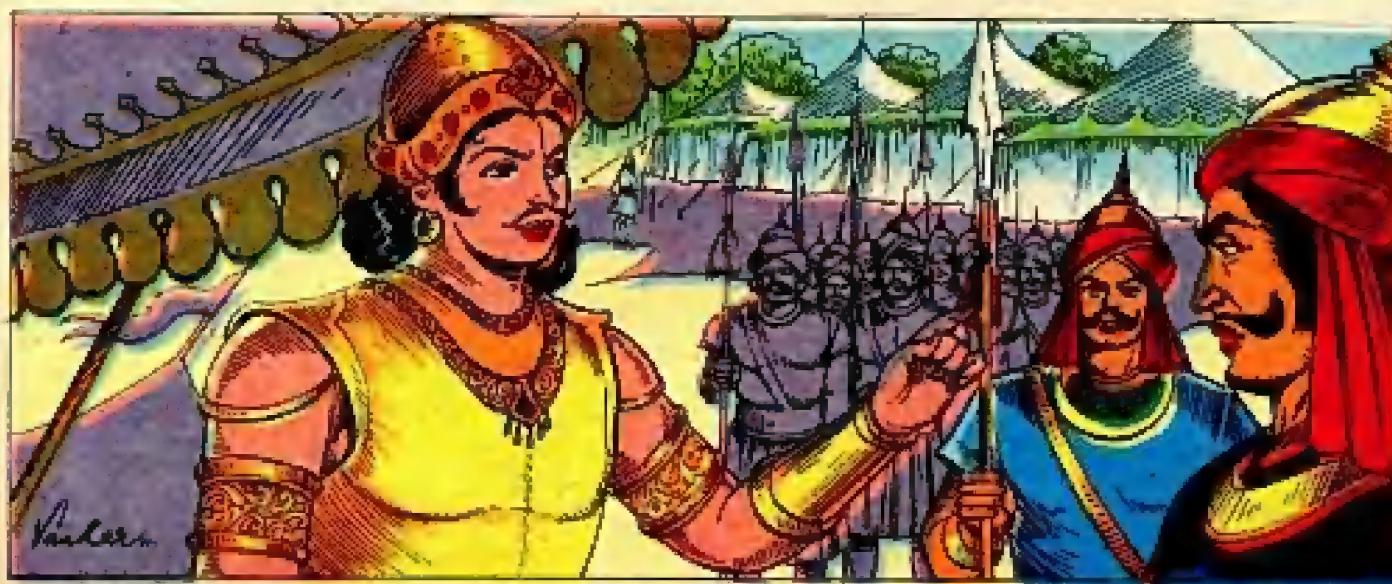
hypocrite. You try to deceive the world with your stance of justice and righteousness. For this you take refuge in the holy scriptures and the Vedas. At least, try to wage a just war. And as for Krishna, he tried to dazzle us in the court with his cheap conjurer's tricks. We shall not be taken in by his tricks on the battlefield. Let him try for victory and regain the lost territories for the Pandavas. As for Bhima, he is only a glutton and is devoid of any fighting skill. His rightful place is in the kitchen."

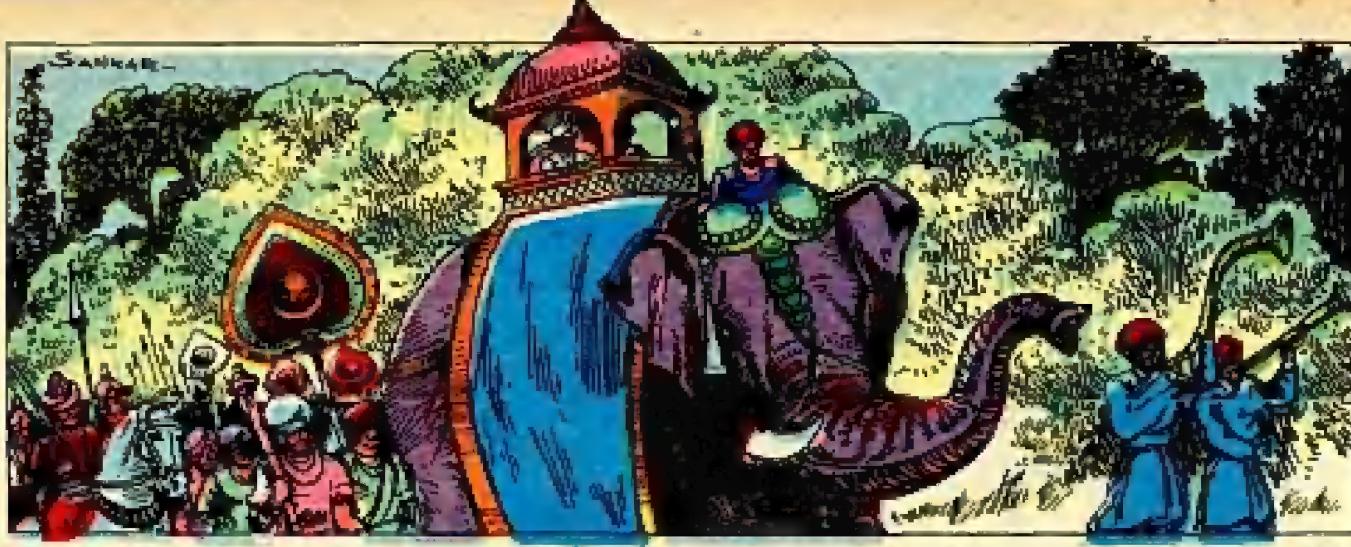
But the Pandavas did not deign to reply to Duryodhana's insults and sent Uluka away.

Then the Pandava armies ranged themselves in the formations arranged by Dhrishtadyumna, their supreme coman-

der. It was decided that Arjuna would take on Karna, Bhima would oppose Duryodhana, Dhrishtaketu would engage Kripa, Uttamouja would fight Aswathama, Yuyudhana would go against Saindhava, Sikhandi would obstruct Bhishma, Saha-deva would challenge Sakuni, Abhimanyu would draw out Vrikshasena, and Dhrishtadyumna would wage war against Drona.

The Pandava armies wheeling about in several formations advanced into the centre of the field. Likewise, the Kauravas advanced and at last the two armies faced each other in the greatest battle to be fought since the world began. Lord Bhishma drew Duryodhana aside, and briefly compared the strength of the two armies.





## A TRUE FRIEND

The land of Pushkara was ruled by King Bhumivarman. He had one son named Rajendra. Manimada, the Minister's son was a bosom friend of the prince.

Rajendra was betrothed to the princess of a neighbouring country. Accompanied by his good friend Manimada, the young prince set out for the capital of his fiancee to get married.

After travelling for a few days, the royal retinue rested on the banks of a river. The two friends made their beds under a huge banyan tree. The prince was soon fast asleep but Manimada was enjoying the serene beauty of the night. Suddenly, he heard voices from the tree. A group of fairies were resting on the branches of the tree.

Said one of them, "This prince won't live to see the daylight. He'll die as soon as he picks up the garland I've thrown on the ground."

Said another, "If he survives that he'll surely die when he eats the ripe mango hanging from that tree." Said the third one, "If he should escape that, he'll die as soon as he steps inside the bride's house because a portion of the wall will fall on him."

The fourth one said, "When he goes to sleep in his chamber, he'll be racked by severe sneezes. If anyone shouts out, 'Long live' for each sneeze until he completes a hundred the prince will live."

The fifth one said, "And if anyone reveals to the prince what we have said, his head shall split into a thousand pieces."

Manimada was aghast to know of the terrible fate hanging over his friend's head. But he was determined to save his friend's life.

From that moment he followed the prince around like a faithful hound. He prevented Rajendra from picking up the garland, and ate the mango before the latter could. When the prince reached the bride's house and was about to step in, Manimada pretended to stumble against the latter and pushed Rajendra out of harm's way when the wall finally caved in. The prince was a little irked by such behaviour but he did not say anything.

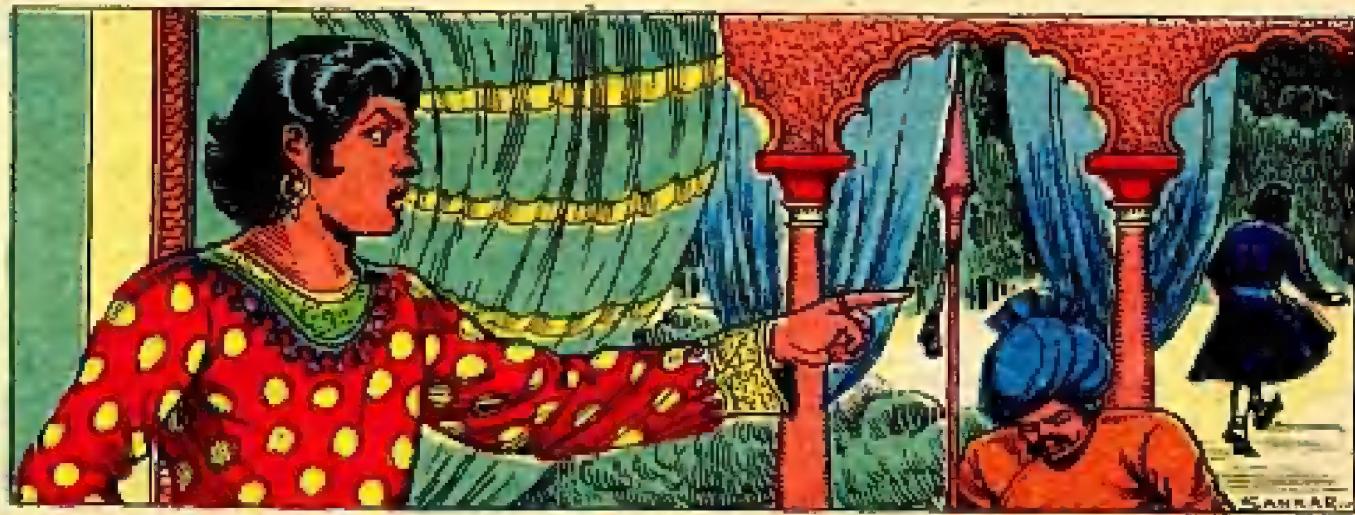
When the prince retired for the night, Manimada crept under the royal bed and began a tally as Rajendra started sneezing. When a hundred were completed, Manimada sprang from his hiding place

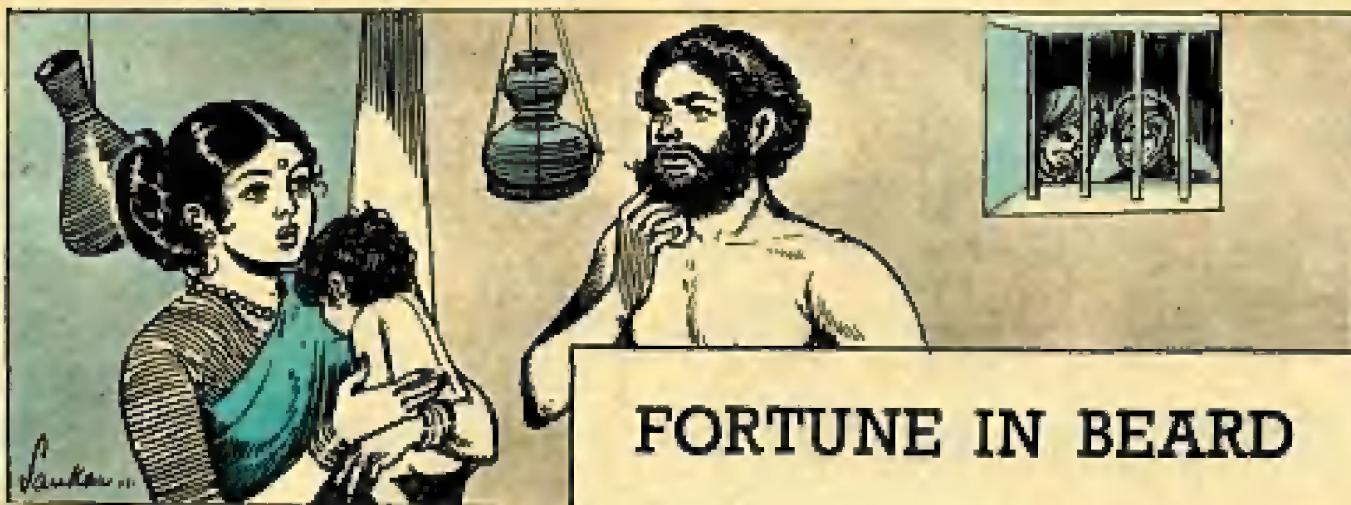
and said to the astonished prince, "Now there is no more danger."

Rajendra's rage at this interruption boiled over and in a harsh voice he ordered his guards to drag this mad man away to the executioner's block.

As Manimada was led away, he entreated the guards to permit him to speak to the prince for the last time. So they led him to Rajendra's presence and there Manimada explained the cause of his strange behaviours. He could not warn the prince before hand because Manimada's own life would have been forfeited.

Rajendra was overwhelmed by gratitude at his friend's revelation and regretted his hasty action in sentencing him to the executioner's block. He heaped honours on his friend and lived in the closest amity with him.





## FORTUNE IN BEARD

Once upon a time there was a man called Som who had a lovely long beard. Naturally he was very proud of this and loved to boast that he had the best beard in the area, but his wife was very vexed because he would not chop it off. One day she said, "Why don't you cut off this horrible growth? Of what use is it to you?"

Som laughed and replied, "Dear, don't be silly. My beard will fetch me a fat profit. You just wait and see. My beard is to me what the corn stalks are to the field."

His wife remarked, "Pooh! What nonsense you talk! As if anyone will buy your beard off you!"

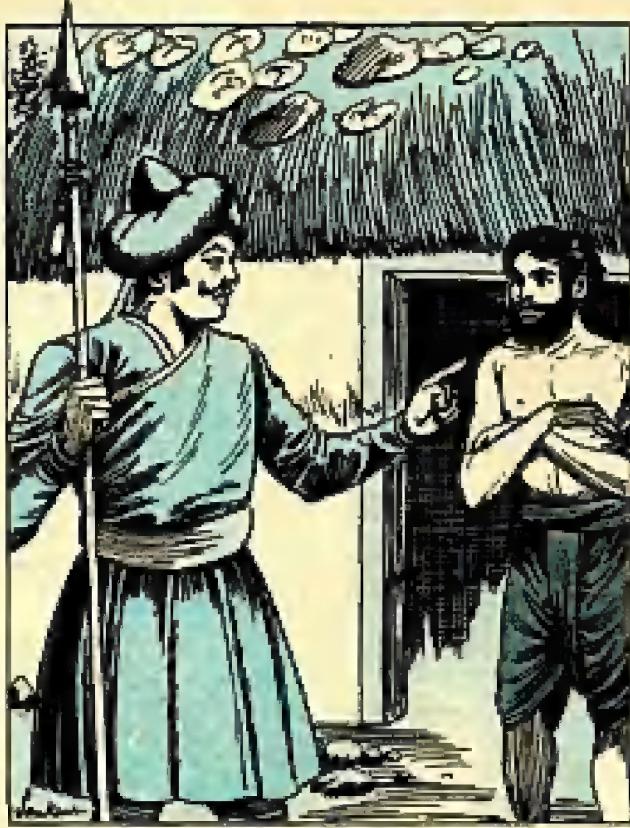
Som chuckled, "Oho! No ordinary man can buy my beard. Only our king can afford to buy my beard. Then I'll get a lot

of money and there'll be an end to our poverty."

This conversation between husband and wife was carried on loudly enough for anyone in the street to hear. Therefore it was not surprising that the king and his minister who were doing their nightly rounds in disguise heard it.

Next day Som was summoned to the royal court. Perplexed in the extreme and afraid he might have offended the king in some manner, Som begged the guard for some time so that he could make himself presentable. But the guard would not listen to him and brought him before the king.

In the court, the minister addressed Som, "Som, the king wants to buy the fine corn stalks, waving on your face. What price do you ask for them?"



Som fell at his feet and said, "Sire, I was only joking. Forgive me and I shall never speak like this."

The minister laughed encouragingly. "Don't be afraid, Som. In truth, the king wishes to buy your fine beard."

Som replied, "Sire, I had no money to pay the barber. That's why I grew a beard. I thought I would buy my wife a saree with the money thus saved."

The minister said patiently. "My dear fellow, I am not joking. Sell your beard to us. Come, what price will you take?"

Emboldened by this Som replied, "Sire, ten rupees would be enough."

The minister gave him ten rupees, and Som parted with his lovely long beard.

On reaching home, he called his wife who took some time to recognise him, so vast was the difference between the shaggy unkempt husband and the now smooth shaven, handsome looking man who faced her.

Som boasted, "See, I told you, I'd make a fortune from my beard. My beard is my grainfield. The king paid ten rupees for that. Of course, he would have paid any amount I asked for."

Now Som's neighbour's wife eaves dropped on their conversation. Her husband too had a bushy beard. That night she said to him. "I hear that our king is buying up beards. Our neighbour Som sold his beard and made a profit. Go and sell your beard to the king. But mind, ask for more. Don't be content with ten rupees."

So, Dom, that was the neighbour's name, thought about his wife's proposal and decided to sell his beard. On an appointed day he presented himself before the king who enquired what he wanted.

Dom replied, "Sire, I understand that you pay well for the

corn stalks that grow on the face. Look at my facial corn. See how it bends before the breeze." Then Dom ran his fingers through his beard proudly.

The amused king looked at his minister who asked, "Good man, what price do you ask for your facial corn?

"I 've tended this field for a long time with loving care. Ten thousand rupees is what I ask for this lot," replied Dom.

"I see," said the minister who had correctly gauged the man's greed for money. "Yesterday a simpleton wanted only ten rupees for his harvest. But you are cleverer. Yet you have not informed the Government of this secret business. Obviously you have not paid any taxes so far. Therefore we order you to pay a penalty of ten thousand rupees."

Dom was startled to hear this. At once he fell at the minister's feet and implored him to forgive him.

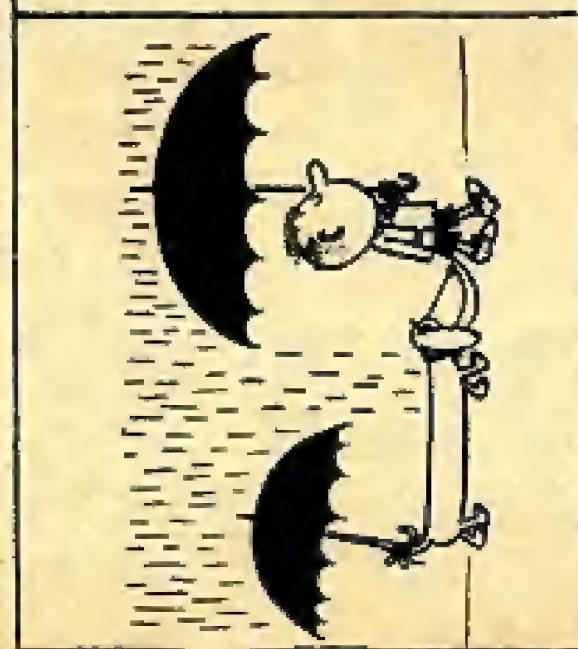
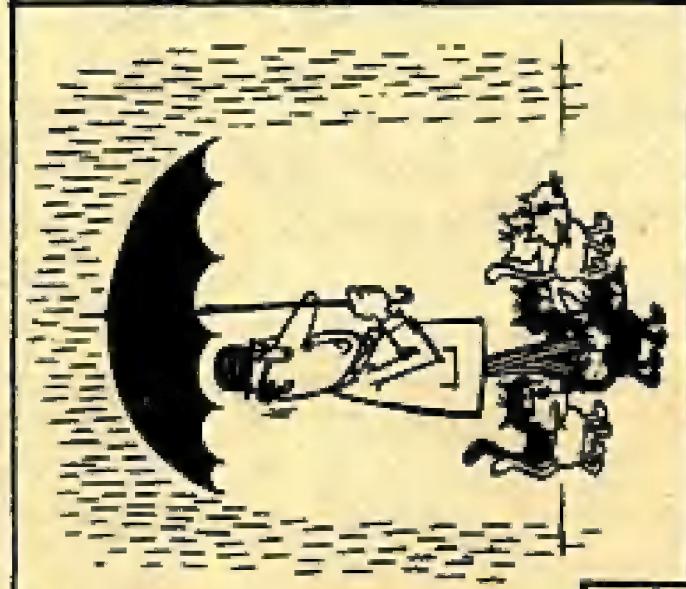
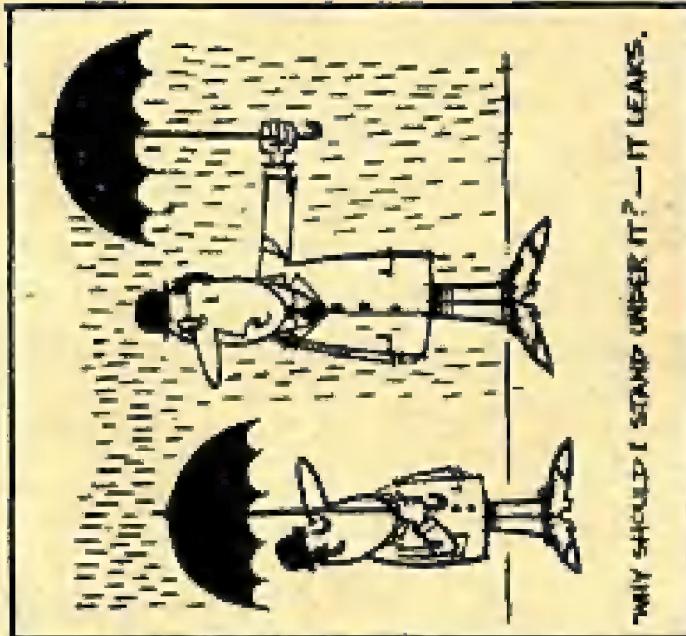
"Sire, forgive me. Greed blinded my eyes. In truth I know nothing about any secret business."

The whole Court laughed uproariously at Dom's discomfiture.

The minister said sternly. "Dom, the king helps the poor and the needy in this manner. But rich man like you should not covet wealth like this. We forgive you because this is your first offence. Don't be jealous of others. Go and let us hear no more about this."

Dom ran from the Court and shut himself up inside his house and refused to see anybody for shame. As for his wife, she stopped her nasty habit of eavesdropping on others.



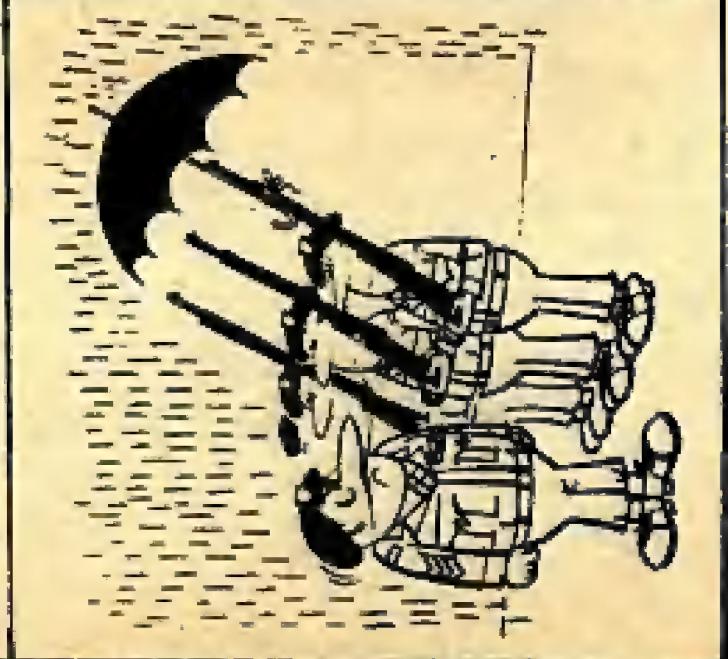


WHY SHOULD I STAND UNDER IT? — IT LEAPS.

**FIDDY**

Cartoonist Roland finds...

**Umbrellas  
Can Be Fun!**



## SHARE THEM!



Life has its moments of joy and ecstasy, sorrow and distress. You might have experienced or been a witness to such of those moments or might have come across some curious things or habits or customs which you wished to tell others. Send us a brief resume of your unforgettable experiences and share them with other readers. You may also send photographs to support your reports. But make it sure they are real. **CONTRIBUTIONS ARE PAID FOR.**

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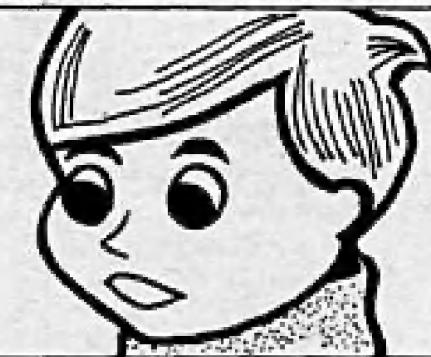
## Playing it right...

We played a cricket match in school today Daddy. But I got out very soon.

Why son, what happened?



Sam! bowled a short ball. I tried to cut, but edged a catch to the wicket-keeper.



Bad luck! But there are other strokes to deal with short balls. For instance, you can play the hook. Move to your right so that the ball comes high up at your left. Hit with an upward swing of the bat.



And if you hit with full force you will swing round completely. You may even find yourself facing the wicket-keeper!



Now then, it's nearly eight-thirty, son. Off to bed. Have you brushed your teeth?

I washed my mouth after dinner, Dad.



That won't do son. You must brush your teeth every night and morning, to remove all decay-causing food particles. You must also massage the gums, so they'll be healthy and strong.



Yes, Daddy.

Come, let's both brush our teeth with Fonhan's toothpaste.

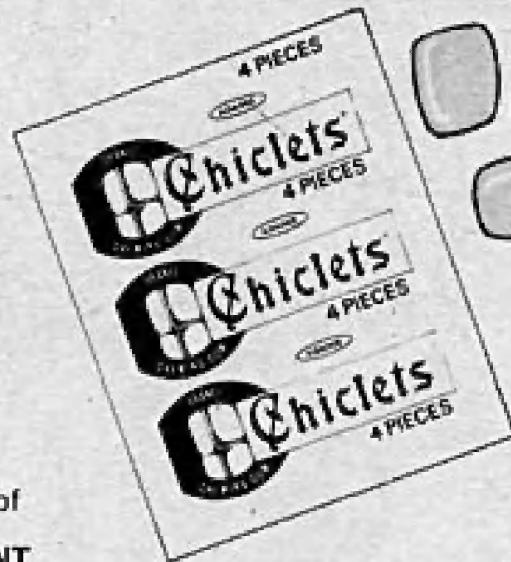
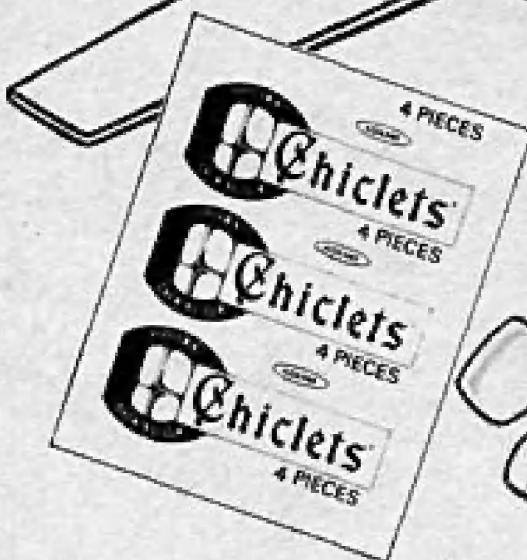
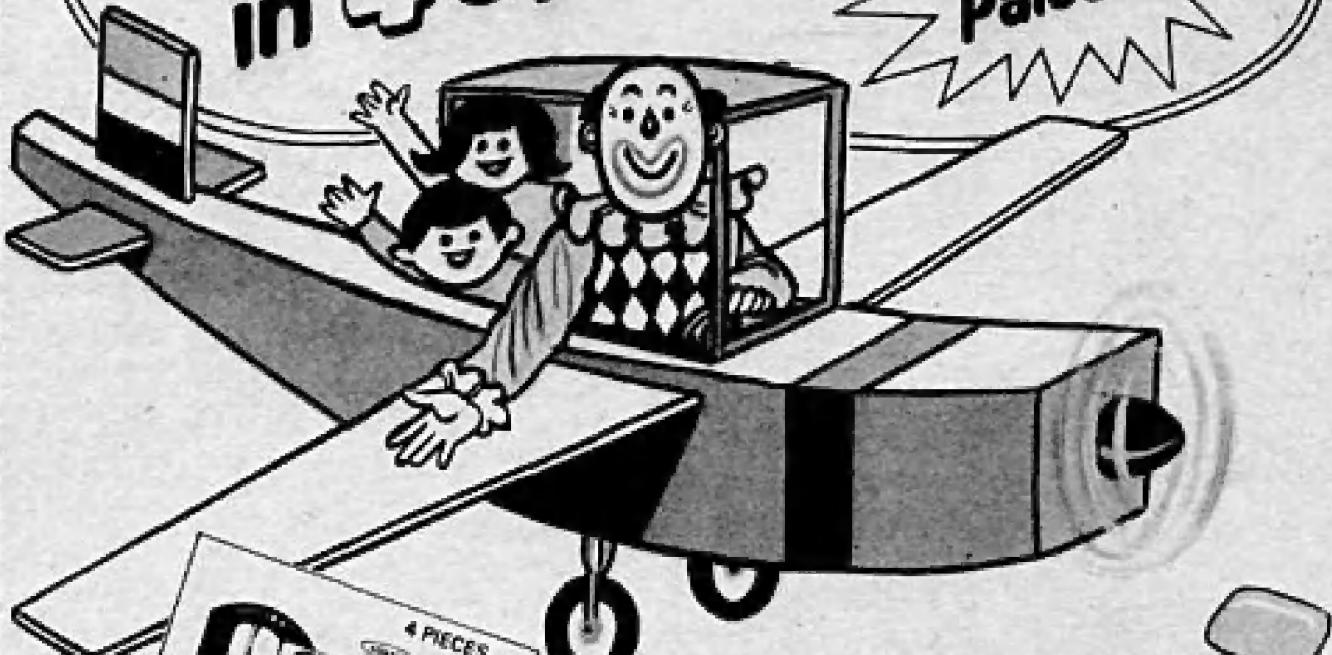


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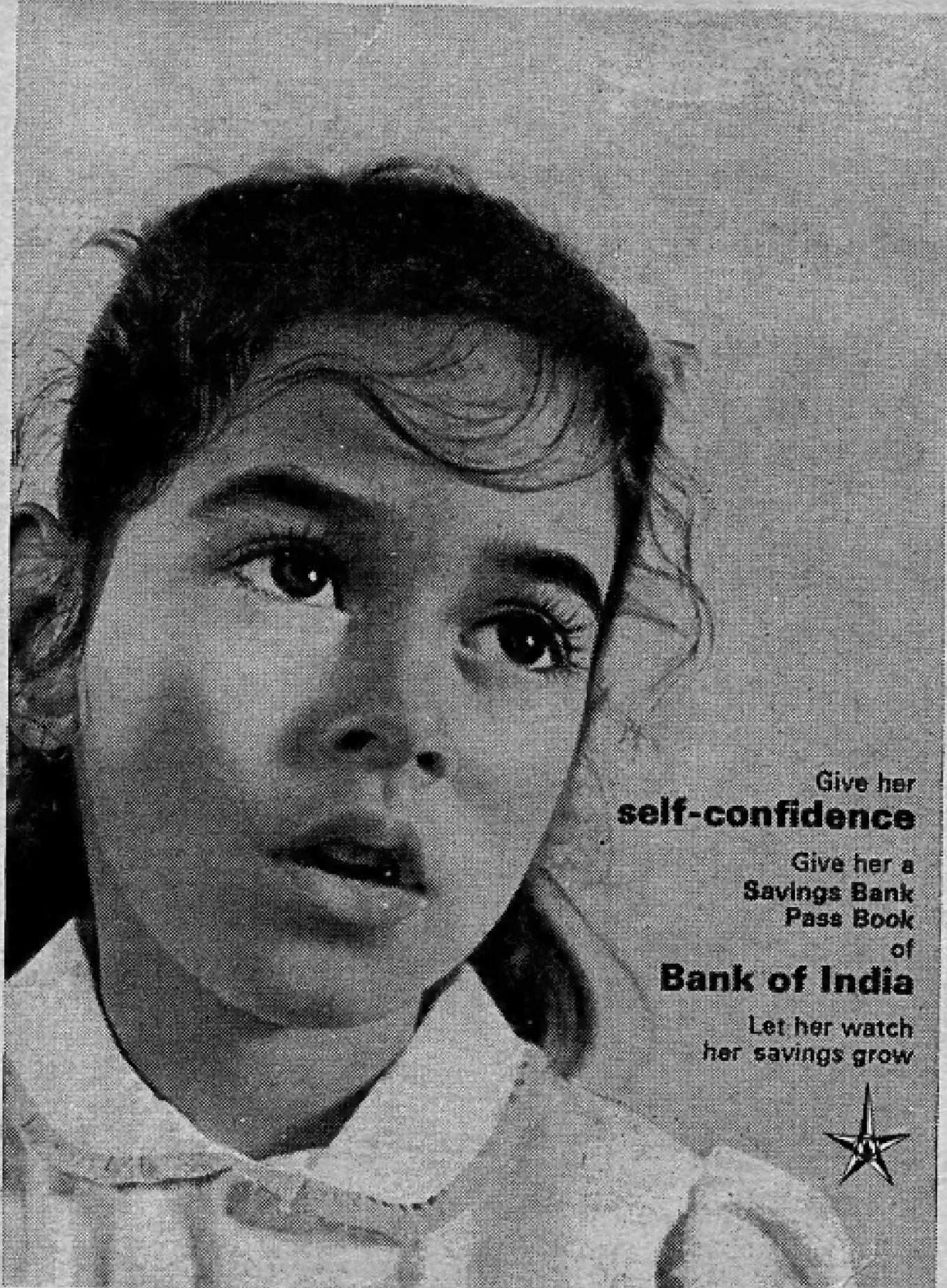
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# Wild Life

**Xenops.** This tiny bird with the perky up-turned beak comes from the family of oven birds, who make their nests in the shape of ovens.